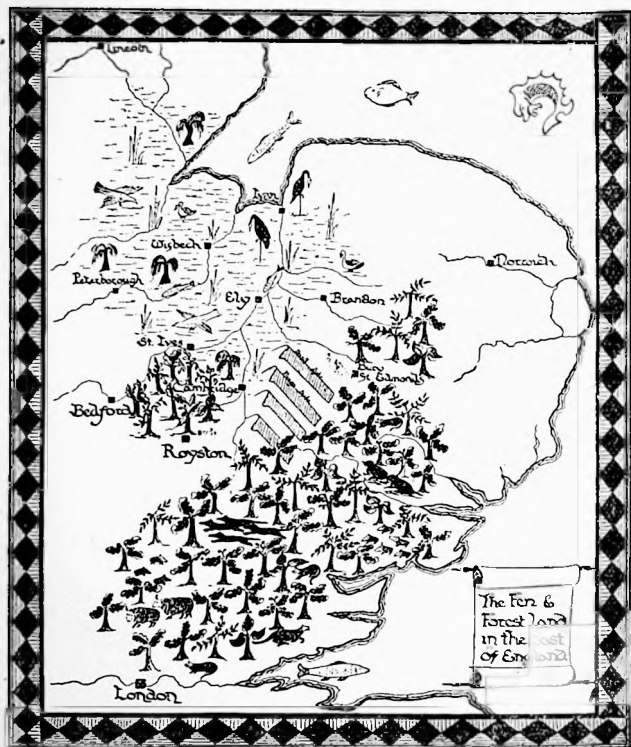


LIFE IN OLD CAMBRIDGE



M. E. MONCKTON JONES



Lincoln

Peterborough

Wisbech

Ely

Stanton

Nottingham

St. Ives

Bedford

Roydon

St. Edmund

London

The Fen &
Forest Land
in the East
of England

LIFE IN OLD CAMBRIDGE

Illustrations of English History

M. E. MONCKTON JONES

With Preface by G. K. CHESTERTON

MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

CAMBRIDGE

W. HEFFER & SONS LTD.

1920

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Author's Preface

This sketch of early life in Cambridge has been compiled in reply to a want expressed in the elementary schools of the town. The many admirable volumes existing on Cambridge have been written by scholars for adult and educated readers. They are unhappily for the most part inaccessible and unintelligible to the children. Yet a knowledge of the factors and the actors which have made up the life of the past is the best means of arousing that community sentiment on which can be based the co-operation of good citizens in the future.

East Anglia plays, perhaps, the next greatest part to London in the Middle Ages especially in trade and political intercourse with Flanders and the Empire, and all this is reflected in the life of the town, under Saxons, Danes, Normans and Angevins. To give the actual writs and regulations of those rulers to a boy, who hardly understands their wording is more worth doing than it seems, for it is often to awaken in him for the first time a sense that History describes the lives of real people whose influence may still affect his life to-day. For Local History consists of

detail, and it is detail, not generalities, which a child can grasp, and about which his keen imagination loves to play. The legends of Cnut, of Britnoth, of Hereward; the doings of Friar or Canon, of Sheriff Picot or King John give them actual dramatis personæ for the stage of their constant mental plays, but these characters cannot be given without some ordered background.

To sketch such a background without offending against the dim truths of Archæology or contracting the due sequence of time; to write it in language which will not flow unheeded over the child's head, involves difficulties which those will understand who have attempted it, and which constantly lay the writer open to charges of inaccuracy, the more just in this case since she is qualified neither by long residence nor special study of Cambridge, but has had to build on the work of others. In stay of scholars' judgment, she would urge that they should speedily meet the need with more authority and simplicity.

Most valuable help has been drawn from Cooper's "Annals of Cambridge," Stubb's "Cambridge," Conybeare's "Cambridgeshire," and Mr. A. Gray's "Cambridge," and his pamphlets in the Cambridge Antiquarian Society's publications. To Mr. Gray I am more especially grateful for his great kindness in reading the manuscript and putting me right on important points. I rejoice to have

this opportunity of thanking Mr. Harold Peake for similar help in Chapter I.; the Cambridge Antiquarian Society and Baron von Hügel for their kindness in permitting me to use illustrations from their library and copies of objects in the Archæological Museum, the Committee of the Free Library for the plan of Barnwell Fair; Father Cuthbert for the use of an extract from his work on "The coming of the Friars Minor," and Messrs. Bowes and Bowes for the arrangement by which it has been possible to include passages from J. W. Clark's "Augustinian Canons of Barnwell." To Miss P. Johnstone my thanks are given for the illustrations, which should, it is hoped, provide children with suggestions for handwork.

Finally, with Colet's words, I would dedicate my ill-finished task to the children: "In which little work if any new things be of me, it is alonely that I have put these parts in a more clear order, and have made them a little more easy to young wits than, me thinketh, they were before. . . . Wherefore all little babes, all little children learn gladly . . . and lift up your little white hands for me."

M. E. MONCKTON JONES.

Barton, Cambs.

December 9, 1919.

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Introduction

I know not by what right I block up the Roman road of this valuable history of Cambridge, unless it be because I have followed it myself with great pleasure, by private favour of the author, or perhaps because my surname happens to be that of a village in the neighbourhood. I have never been to Cambridge except as an admiring visitor; I have never been to Chesterton at all; either from a sense of unworthiness, or from a faint superstitious feeling that I might be fulfilling a prophecy in the country-side. Anyone with a sense of the savour of the old English country rhymes and tales will share my vague alarm that the steeple might crack or the market cross fall down, for a smaller thing than the coincidence of a man named Chesterton going to Chesterton. I have never really studied history at Cambridge, or anywhere else. And if I have heartily enjoyed this modern history of Cambridge, I fear it is not because it bears a resemblance to the

Cambridge Modern History. In short, while my qualifications for pronouncing on the point at all are highly dubious, the strong sympathy I do feel for the work is mostly due to its marked difference from most academic digests. What is the matter with those academic attempts at universal history is that they are generally so very much the reverse of universal. They assemble the specialists, so as to cover all subjects except the real subject. The result is that we only succeed in having all things studied in a narrow spirit, instead of one thing studied in a universal spirit. That is one reason for liking a thing like a local history ; that it is a large story about a little thing. I prefer the philosophical results of a man examining a mole-hill, rather than those of a million moles exploring a mountain.

It is to be hoped that the example be followed, touching many other English districts ; nor is there any particular reason why it should not be followed touching all of them. It is true that the author of this book happens to have to deal with one of the towns universally recognised as historic and

picturesque, containing some of the chief monuments of medieval art, as well as some of the chief chairs of modern education. But this particular interest of the pageant of successive periods really belongs less to Cambridge as Cambridge than to Cambridge as a country town. Even the most urban towns are mostly made up of country towns ; that is they have grown by absorbing the surrounding towns and villages. We are tempted in a fanciful fashion to forget that sites at least stand for ever, and cannot be created or destroyed. It is as if we imagined that Brixton had appeared recently as a radiant object in the sky, like the New Jerusalem ; or that the very earth on which Manchester stands had been manufactured in the Manchester factories. But, indeed, Manchester itself is the clearest of all cases to the contrary. The Manchester School was credited with being unhistorical, or even anti-historical ; but the very name of Manchester is a piece of history, and even of ancient and classical history. There are no new places in England ; for there is no such thing as a new place in nature, or even in abstract logic. Therefore

there is no reason why we should not have an epic and almost prehistoric history of West Kensington, or the truth about the romantic story of Clapham. It would be the same great story of Rome, of the Church, of the Crusades, of the great guilds like those that made the cathedrals, if anyone had the moral courage to do for Clapham what the lady who wrote this book has done for Cambridge.

If I might give one example from this book, out of many, of the sort of thing that is so seriously wanted in a popular history, and is so seldom present in one, I would adduce the wisdom of giving in their regular order the actual terms of the charter which King John gave to the burghers. I do not exaggerate when I say I think them far more important than the charter which King John gave to the barons. The latter is always called the great charter, largely because it was chiefly concerned with great lords; but this is concerned with smaller men, and therefore with larger matters. It consists of fourteen clauses; and as we read it we feel passing before us and around us all the living

movement of the Middle Ages. Besides the essential things, the general presence of a sort of ideal trading, analogous to the theory of a just price, we have a hundred little things of singular historic interest, especially when they have since grown into larger things. We have, for instance, reference to certain privileges only belonging "to the king's moneyers and servants"; the latter being the position of the Jews, and probably involving many privileges for the Jews. We have the curious feature of continual reference to something rather unique and characteristic of our own history; the exceptional role and position of the City of London. There is an inevitable reference to ale, which flows as in rivers through all such records; and especially of an occasion when the burghers were sternly confined to drinking only one kind of ale, instead of absorbing all possible kinds of ale in their due succession. Men are often confined to a sort of "scot-ale" in the tied houses of our own time; but to-day the celebration lasts all the year round. In short, the mere citation of this medieval document in detail gives the amateur reader

like myself a real glimpse of the medieval democracy. From the stock histories of his youth he would have learned little or nothing about that particular date, except the extraordinary wickedness of King John and the extraordinary goodness of the British Constitution. But to those old Cambridge men King John was only the name of the King who happened to give them the glorious rights of guildsmen. And I very much fear that, to them, the modern thing called the British Constitution would only be the thing under which the rights and the guilds were alike gone.

G. K. CHESTERTON.

Life in Old Cambridge.

CHAPTER I.

The Grassland Strip

WHAT was there 2,000 years ago where Cambridge now stands? A bird taking flight from Castle Hill would have had below him a shining streak of waters, such as you see when the floods are out on the commons. In places it would be half-a-mile or so across, but if he flew north, Ely way, the lake would run into another and another, each wider than the last, so that by Waterbeach there would be a bay with waves chasing each other before the wind. Right away to the Wash and the sea were marshes, and a log or raft, put into the water at Castle Hill, could drift on mile after mile till it came out on to tossing seas.¹ Cam and Ouse and their streamlets ran together into a waste of waters which cut

¹ See W. Stubbs, Cambridge, p. 9.

off Norfolk and Suffolk from the rest of England, making them almost an island.

Out of the shallow water of the marsh, reeds and grasses grew thick and tall and made green banks on either side of the river. These banks sloped gently upwards and spread out into wide hillsides, on which might grow gorse and sloe and a few may-trees. Then among the may-trees might come a few birches, white-stemmed and dainty, swinging in the breeze, and here and there a feathery ash-tree or a thickset oak. Closer and closer grow the trees, big beeches and great dark oaks as the hills rise, till presently all light is shut out and you can only see a yard or two either way. For many miles the woods go on, covering the hillsides with a dense coat of timber for many days' journey till they feel the bleak east wind and the salty air of the North Sea.

Now between the forest and the water there lies only one long narrow strip of open grassland, a sunny upland by which men could travel in the daylight, leaving the dark, tangled forest to left and the shining water to right as they ran southwards from the bracken lands of Norfolk towards the warmer uplands

that fence the Thames valley from the North winds. Look at it well, that corridor of grassy slopes. Some forty miles it runs, flanked by Forest on the one side, Fenland on the other. It holds the secret of the life of Cambridge.

Whoever comes sailing over the chill North Sea, land where he will along the coast between Thames and Ouse mouths, he must come inland by that grassy slope. If he leave ship at Lynn he cannot cross the marshes but must work along their edges to Brandon before he can turn west and south. If he land at Harwich the Forest faces him, dark, tangled, full of beasts, and he must work northward to turn its outposts till he comes to the open passage at Brandon. And so too if a troop would find its way to the sea from Bedford or north from London, the Forest blocks the Way eastwards, the Marshes bar it on the north, only by Royston slopes to Brandon can it pass to the east and the sea.

That was the Open Road, "over the hills and far away"; everyone out of East Anglia seeking his fortune in the world must tread the springy turf of the Brandon and Royston uplands.

On the sunny south-looking slopes of the chalk hills lay the pit-dwellings of the first men. To try to live lower down in the valleys was dangerous, for often the water would rise and soak the soil, and any huts or camps they had made would be washed away. It was a pity, for the grass down there was longer and richer than on the hillsides ; in the lakes too and rivers were many fish and wild duck to be caught by those who knew how, and so after a time men did try to live down there in spite of the danger. Leading down to the river was a strip of gravel, and here and there it spread out into a patch of drier ground, a little hillock standing perhaps a few feet higher than the grass elsewhere ; there they would dig out a flat floor for a hut, throwing the earth up in a little round wall into which they thrust strong branches to meet overhead as a roof. The spaces between them they blocked with more earth mixed with reeds or grass, and thatched the top with reeds. When it rained for days together the mud walls began to melt ; then the marsh water too was swollen and rose. They were so often washed away that at last they found a way to protect their

huts. All round the dry patch or hillock, on which their huts were crowded together, the men would dig a ditch deep enough to carry off flood water, and with the soil that they dug out they threw up a great bank. Such a place, perhaps, was once the spot we now call Cambridge ; flat as it looks it must have stood above the surrounding marsh when first men built their huts there.

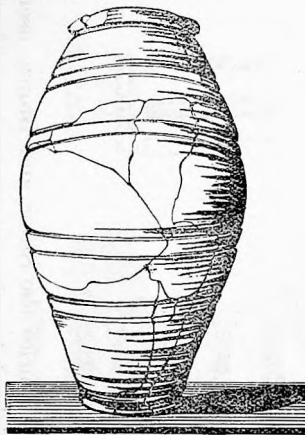
Beside the group of huts ran the Cam, a long, winding chain of lakes and bogs, and beyond it the sun would set behind a big hillside. If you could get across the water and scramble up the hill you would find the land still rising slowly as you went west away. Where the river ran round the foot of the hill it was easy to cross, for the bottom was gravel. A ridge of gravel began there and passed by the huts and back all the way to the grassland slopes of the Gogs. From the Wash southwards this was the first place where you could cross the marshes.

There between the river and the grasslands the first dwellers in our district, little wiry men whose ancestors had come from warm lands in the south of Europe made their home,

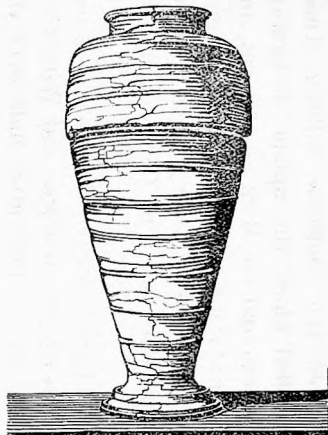
many thousand years ago. They were very short, with long, egg-shaped heads, fine black hair and beard and sharp features. From the hill their keen sight might often pick out a troop of men and cattle, moving along the grassway on the slopes of the Gogs, seeking new pasture or going to chaffer for flints at the Royston pit, or northwards to Grimes Graves at Brandon.

Such a troop running lightly afoot soon beat out a track over the hillsides, winding here to avoid a rough growth of thorn-scrub and oak-tree, mounting higher there to escape from the muddy margin of a marsh or streamlet, and marked along its course by mounds raised to cover the bones of mighty chiefs or to guide strange wayfarers.

Such was the country round Cambridge in the New Stone Age and Bronze Age. To the north-east were the Brakelands (Norfolk and Suffolk), open common and heath. There the early men clustered around the flinty gravel pit or chalk quarry, fed their reindeer and the little, long-horned oxen on the grasses and mosses, and traded in cattle, hides, pottery and basket-work. To chaffer



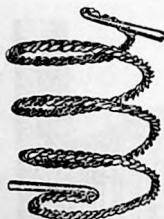
Late Celtic Vessel, found at Hauxton, Cambs :
with Bronze Fibula, in 1889.



Kimmeridge Shale Urn. Found at Old
Warden, in Bedfordshire.

with them came other groups of the same people from the southern valleys. These had travelled along the upland Ridgeways from Chiltern and the Berkshire Downs, and even distant Stonehenge or Avebury, bringing beads of the beautiful Irish gold or lumps of tin and perhaps lead from Cornwall and the West.

These old grass ways of the stone users can still be traced and in Berks and Wilts they still sweep on for mile after mile over the wide downs paved with soft springy green turf and thyme.



Gold Armilla, from Grunty Key.

(1)



Process of making
the Gold Armilla.

For centuries the Stone and Bronze users held the land, learning by degrees how to burn the grass and scratch the surface of the hill

¹ The original is in the Fitzwilliam Museum.

sides, so that grains of corn would grow into a sparse crop to make them bread. But at long last the news of their pleasant, peaceful



A Bronze Torc, from Herringfleet.

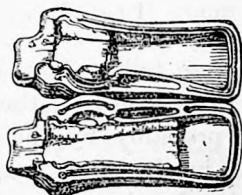


A Spearhead, found at Cambridge, 1903.

homes on the uplands and the wealth of beasts and fodder to be found there, and the



A Flat Celt, found at Fordham, Cambs.



A Bronze Celt Mould, open and closed; found at New Street, Cambridge, 1903.

clean shining Irish gold, led other races, the taller round-headed men of Central Europe

to come over the sea. These men learnt to use weapons of bronze, and gradually spread over the grasslands of the east and midlands and far north-eastern Scotland.¹

A few of them seem to have reached our district, for in Barnwell was found one of the pottery vases called Beakers which they made, and a few of their bronze celts or axes, but we don't know whether they settled here. They were half-a-foot taller than the first men, and had beetling eyebrows and big cheekbones.

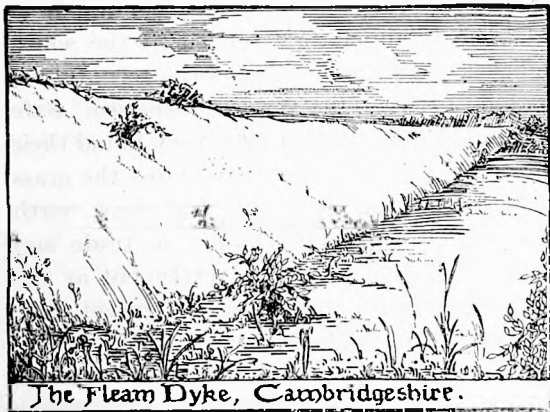
The Iron Age

THEY were followed by wave upon wave of races from Europe, these new-comers too drawn probably by the wish to trade. Of middle height and beardless, with round bullet-heads, they seem to have been more ready to fight than the rest, or perhaps they had more cause, as each fresh group filled up the open grass lands and had to live nearer the river or to clear away some of the forest. By this time men had found out how to work iron ore into tools and weapons, and had to

¹ See Crawford. *Geographical Journal* (Aug. and Sept., 1912).

build strongholds to keep their families and cattle safe. Tribe after tribe pressed into Britain between 1200 B.C. and the time when Christ was born. One of them was called Britons, and though it was only a small group it gave its name to the land. Coming from over the Channel they settled in the south and east, a strong tribe named the Iceni taking the land between the Wash and the sea. Safe against attack on either side, they found their only danger in the open way across the grass by which for centuries folk had come north from the Downs and Thames to trade and settle. So they planted a settlement at our fords of the river and along the gravel ridge to south of it, higher up, too, where Grantchester now is they passed the narrower streams. But others could do so, and perhaps wrest the rich grass and riverside lands from them. How should they secure it against all comers from the south? On the chalk hill tops where little wood could grow except the beeches they built big camps, digging out the soil for 12 or 15 feet, and throwing it up into a great encircling mound on which they could plant a strong fence of timber. This would

do well to hold the hill, but enemies could still pass along the open way below to the rich lands of Norfolk and Suffolk. They must bar the open Ridgeway. So they made Dykes of earth such as fenced their camp-villages,



but longer and mightier. Like the men of China or Babylon they would build a great earth-wall to shut the open entrance to the land of their tribe. From in under the eastern forest of oaks and beeches on the hills it should run out into the open where wind and sun played hide and seek with the cloud-shadows all along its sides. There the grass

grew short and sweet and the Dyke ran on and on down the slopes to where the water of the Fens made marching impossible. Right on down into the water they built it so that there was no room to pass between the dyke and the marsh at one end of the dyke and the forest thickets at the other, and a few Britons on the dyke could challenge all comers from the south. Two such great Banks and ditches run close to Cambridge, the Fleam Dyke from Balsham to Fen Ditton still lies like a great grass swathe across the way to Newmarket and Brandon. Not one or two only were the Dykes, but four. North of it lies "the Devil's Dyke," and to the south two more.

An invader trying to come in along the Way would first have had to force the passage of the Brand Ditch, running from the bogs between Melbourne and Fowlmere to Heydon on the hills above the Thames, then the Brent Ditch near Abington (then that of the so-called Worsted Street),¹ then Fleam Dyke, and at last the mighty Devil's Dyke, a massive pile 30 feet high from the bottom of the Ditch to the top

¹ Probably not a dyke: the old name is Wolf Street Way.

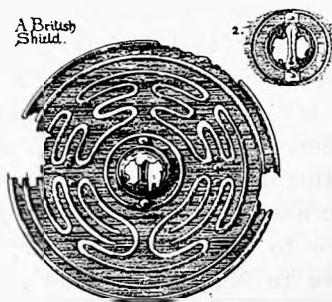
of the mound and reaching unbroken for 10 long miles, from Reach on the water to the forest Wood Ditton.¹

¹ See Conybeare's *Cambridgeshire*, p. 14.

CHAPTER II.

The Romans

IN the Iceni's time the great Roman Empire, under those Caesars who commanded that "all the world should be taxed," had spread northward and westward from Rome



1. Front of Shield. 2. Reverse showing handle.
Found at Coptery Fen, near Ely, Cambs, 1846.

till it reached the English Channel. Across the water the men of Gaul had been fighting hard for their freedom with Julius, the first Caesar. They sent for help to their brothers in Britain.

Reinforcements slipped over from the island to their aid, not as they go now, to France in great steam transports, but in tiny wooden boats, rigged with queer sails of skin or leather. Caesar himself wrote down what they were like.¹

“The keels somewhat flatter than our ships, so that they can take the shallows more easily at ebb tide; the prows and the sterns too very upright, suited to the great waves and storms. The ships are made of wood throughout to bear strain and hard use to the utmost; the rowers benches fixed with iron nails as thick as my thumb to beams a foot wide; the anchors bound with chains instead of rope; skins for sails, the leather tanned fine, either because they have no linen or don't know how to use it, or more likely because they have to bear such ocean storms and wind-storms and such weight of ships that they do not think it handy to manage with cloths.”

Wishing to see their land, Caesar gathered a fleet of galleys and sailed to the white cliffs of Kent. Despite resistance he marched his

¹ Caesar D.B.G. iii, *Ships of the Veneti of South Brittany*.

legions into the great forests, seizing camp after camp on the hilltops till he wrested even St. Albans from Caswallon, King of certain of the British tribes in the Thames district. After this Britain was very loosely linked to Rome for a hundred years till Caswallon's grandson, Cymbeline, made East Anglia his own : his coins are often found here. But the Iceni hated his law, and later helped a Roman army to defeat his son Caradoc, and make Britain into a Roman province.¹ The first orders the new subjects got were to lay down their arms and this no doubt they would have done but the fierce, keen Iceni, who had fought shoulder to shoulder with the Romans against the other tribes, expected better treatment. They thought themselves as good as any Romans, and rather than lay down the spears and swords which they had carried from boyhood they defied mighty Rome, the world-wide Empire, and called the other tribes to help them to turn out the foreigners. They re-built the Dykes ; strong fences of timber were no doubt reared along their crests and all the manhood of the tribes

¹ Gardiner. *Students History of England*. Vol. I, p. 2.

gathered behind them to withstand the enemy.

If we try to imagine what followed we may guess that the Roman forces, led by Ostorius Scapula, would march north from Ermine Street along the Icknield Way. Perhaps they crossed the Cam at Shelford and rested for the night in the grass at Granhams, where you may still trace three sides of a simple Roman Camp. On the Gogs, just above them, would frown the hill camp of the Iceni. Next morning no doubt the Roman trumpets blew to



Brass Figure of a Roman Soldier, found near Ely.

the attack, and Scapula led his soldiers out. Steadily climbing the long easy slopes they kept their ranks and poured over the earthworks of Vandlebury. But the main resistance had been prepared at the Fleam Dyke. Crowded together on the Dyke the Britons would look out eagerly, only to see stragglers fleeing to them and the enemy following swift behind. Like a steel wall the Roman legions would march up, shield locked in shield, and

the rough arrows and spears of the natives rain down harmlessly for the most part on their solid front. Pierced by their javelins, smitten down by their short, keen swords, the Britons soon broke and fled out over the long nine miles to the Devil's Dyke. As when a great sea-dyke bursts the waves pour through and spread along the plain, so men fleet-footed raced the ponies of their leaders for the last shelter. The great thirty-foot Devil's Dyke, crowning the long climb to the moor looked indeed immovably safe, no doubt, for those who could slip in behind it; but the one entrance was soon blocked, and then the fugitives crowding on one another could not even turn to defend themselves. The Romans coming hard after them found them as easy prey as a flock of sheep, penned for the shearing. They did not spare; when evening fell hardly any of the Iceni was left alive and the rest were slaves.

Caradoc indeed escaped the slaughter, having earlier been driven away into the fastnesses of Wales to raise what help he could, but the next year the Romans had followed

him even there and shattered the last hope of freedom.¹

The Roman rule was harsh. Roman money-makers bullied and robbed the Britons for 12 weary years till a last outrage against the Queen Boudica brought revolt. The savagery of its short-lived success led to fearful revenge when Rome once more got the upper hand, and the men of Cambridgeshire, who had led the revolt, were wiped out. The Romans drove straight stone-paved roads through the land from camp to camp; held fortresses at Colchester, at Godmanchester, at Chesterford and in Cambridge itself, which held down the feeble remnants of the warlike tribes till they grew quieter and learned the arts and civil ways of their rulers.

¹ For the sake of the story I have followed Conybeare, p. 19.

CHAPTER III.

The Province

WHEN the Romans were masters of the land they used many of the old British hilltop forts as camps or outposts and built others of their own fashion. The coasts were guarded by Roman galleys and by camps, such as Caistor and Brancaster, and all the eastern coast was under the rule of a Roman called "The Count of the Saxon Shore" (a name the later story will explain). Each camp was square in shape with gates North, South, East, and West, from which the great roads ran, so that Britain was covered with a stone network of military roads in which the knots were stone cities, each one built about an open market-place or "Forum." The old earthen walls were faced with squared blocks of stone and each gateway was defended by a stone turret. Safe inside the chester gates Roman nobles built beautiful "Villas," baths and temples; and even in our days men often find 10 or 12 feet underground remains of the altars they set up to their gods, the pottery they made or brought from Gaul or the coins,

stamped with their Caesars' names. Near the old fords fine bridges of timber or stone carried the new roads.

At Cambridge the hillside on the west of the ford became a great oblong chester, 2,500 feet from East to West, and 2,000 feet from North to South, its walls ran from Chesterton Lane, round the site of St. Giles' and the top of the hill, where now St. Peter's stands,¹ down again to Merton Hall garden. From the Forum, no doubt a Roman Governor could look out over the whole land, see the distant trees that grew on the Isle of Ely, standing among the northern waters, watch the street that climbed away north-west to Godmanchester, or turning scan the height of Vandlebury camp for the glitter of the sentinel's signal. To the south as the Roman Peace grew villas began to rise on the pleasant, sunny slopes over which Ermine Street ran, making for Londinium and the galleys that sail for Rome. As their builders cut down the forest above and drained the marshes below troops of slaves went out from every

¹ For inconclusive evidence of a temple to Diana on this site see *The Cambridge Portfolio*, p. 264.

villa to plough and tend the soil, and for the first time the Cambridge lands began to shine with waving fields of wheat and oats and barley. Vineyards too they may have made facing the sun as in their own Italy, rows of short creepers forming glistening patches of green among the cornfields, but above all were great herds of sheep, driven out to crop the sweet grass and thyme of the hillsides and carefully guarded at night from the forest wolves. Beside each villa the slaves quarters or "ergastula" formed the black heart of the domain, where men of Africa, or Asia, or rude tribesmen caught in the woods of Germania or Helvetia bowed under the whip of the freedman who farmed the land for his master. In the forum of Cambridge, as in other cities, no doubt men and women with their children could be seen put up for sale. Here perhaps a learned Greek, whose master had tired of study, would fetch a big price; there a Walloon captured in the Flemish marshes would be advertised as a skilled boatman, likely to be useful in the Fens; here again a shivering Egyptian or Arab would be bought to act as stoker in the

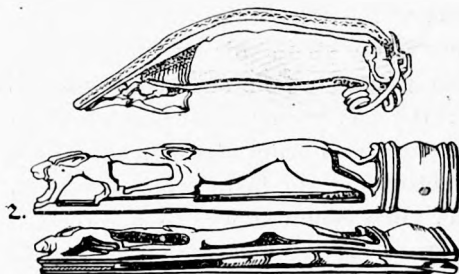


Roman Vessel, found at Leadenhall Street, London.



Roman Pottery, found at Horningsea, Cambridgeshire, 1885.

villa "hypocaust." Native cattle, still half wild, would be driven in from the eastern grazing grounds, hustling one another in fear over the strange white bridge¹, to mingle with oxen shipped hither from Italy and Gaul: the rough, short, dun ponies from the Berkshire downs would be squealing and biting



1. Roman Bronze Fibula, found in Cambridge Pers. 1883.
2. Roman Bronze Knife Handle, from Richborough, Kent.

at the glossy, desert-bred Roman chariot horses as they drank together at the aquaduct. Below on the river the bluff-bowed galleys would lie loading up with grain for Caesar's soldiers in Germania, while the red ware made of Terra Sigillata they had brought, signed with (Cistio Titi) the Flemish maker's mark, lay

¹ No remains of a stone bridge have been found, but as a centre of roads it seems probable that Cambridge would have had one.

heaped upon the straw on the wharf. Soon it would be shown in the dealer's booth and carried to the purchaser's villa at Foxton or Cottenham or out across the hills to Colchester. You may see pieces of them still, and trace the maker's name if you ask in the Archæological Museum. When you handle them try to picture the Cambridge of those days, the stately Roman in his bordered toga entering the temple to pour a goblet of wine to the gods; the gay young centurion wheeling his century in the Forum changed the guard at the Praetorium; the farmer citizens from the country villas each followed by his steward and a troop of slaves, meeting to pay their tithes to the decurion, to hear the news from Rome, and enjoy an hour's gossip in the baths. The fortunate Briton who had made friends with the Romans and secured his freedom, dressed now in a toga, aping Roman manners. He stands to listen perhaps to a preacher of the strange new Christian creed and laughs as his Roman friend declares it is only another of the Eastern sects that have been turning the world upside down and should be left to slaves and women.

For while the Romans had been settling their new province of Britain strange things had happened in Rome.

One day about the time that Scapula subdued the Iceni a troop of men walked out from among the great marble palaces and temples of Rome along the old south road, the Via Appia. They were very plainly clad, quiet but confident in bearing and talked with great eagerness as they hastened along. When they had reached a halting place where three taverns stood, they seated themselves under the shade of an olive tree, but one young man went on down the road and stood looking southwards. Presently he waved his hand, and they sprang up to greet a little group of men coming towards them led by one small of stature and roughly clad but bearing himself like a victorious general. When he reached them he raised his hand in blessing, and they all bowed their heads, then broke into a joyous chant. It was St. Paul, and the Roman Christians were doubly overjoyed when they heard of his escape from shipwreck and thought of the teaching he would give them in the coming days. As a

prisoner awaiting trial he would be kept in Rome, and they could care for him and learn from his lips the story of his conversion and the work he had done among the Greeks. During all the three hundred years that Rome held Britain St. Paul's disciples learnt and practised the new faith. Sometimes they were left in peace to worship quietly, and then Nero or Domitian would take a fancy to root out the religion which made even slaves independent and defiant of their orders. Then the Christians would hide in underground burial-places to hold their services or flee into waste places, but their best were taken and brought into the arena to fight with African lions or wild boars from the Apennines, while the city-bred Romans sat on the marble tiers of seats in the great theatre and cheered or hissed as the sight aroused their passions. But "the blood of martyrs is the seed of the Church": men were moved by the sight of these heroic sufferers and asked what it was that made them go singing to their awful deaths. Many more became Christians, and even among the settlers in Britain the faith spread. The symbol of the cross was raised

over stones that had been pagan altars and temples were turned into churches. At last in 321 A.D. the Emperor Constantine gave leave to all his subjects openly to worship Christ, so throughout Britain the church spread, bishops ruled great districts, and helped the praefects in the cities.

Where Castle Hill stands all these things happened day by day for three hundred years and more till Britons forgot they had ever been free and ignorant or had to fight for life against the wild beasts or among themselves. But the prosperous, peaceful life began to be disturbed by rumours of trouble in Rome. The Emperors had left the city. The Goths were threatening the new capital, Constantinople, then Italy, at last even Rome itself, and sacked it in 410 A.D. The Roman troops were recalled to Italy. Cohort after cohort must have marched into Chesterton from the North ; some came down Watling Street from Chester and the Welsh Marches ; others from the great North Wall through Eboracum (York) and down the Ermine Street or by the Akeman Street from the Coast, where the Count of the Saxon shore held watch and ward against

those pirates of the Wide Sea. Into the camp on Castle Hill they would pour, rest a night or two, and then march out by the southern gate down Akeman Street to join the road for London or to pass by Silchester to Venta Belgarum (Winchester) and take ship for Gaul and Italy, for "all roads lead to Rome." Legion after legion got their marching orders, and when the wealthy farmers asked "Who guards the Wall?" "Is there no fighting with the Picts?" centurion or legionary shook his head and muttered grim stories of the blocking of the wide gateways that guard the camps behind the great North Wall, and how a dozen men were left to guard five miles of frontier; how empty lay the great base camps, while all who still dared live upon the border drew together into the walled chesters for safety. For Rome, the Eternal City, was falling and the "Pax Romana," which had brooded over every province, even to distant Britain, was coming to an end. Now every Roman lord and British farmer must look to his own right arm to shield him and his villa.

CHAPTER IV.

Saxon Times : Pagan and Christian The Desolation

FOR a hundred years Cambridge and the rest of Britain suffered grievous things. As the shining legions of Rome marched away south the prosperous Britons and Roman settlers were left to themselves. British chiefs took up the title of King and issued coins stamped with their heads as the Caesars had done; they are found now sometimes, little hoards of them hidden away in the ground in an earthenware jar or single coins dropped perhaps in hasty flight from a lonely villa beset and burned by the barbarians. In the cities Decurions and Bishops still held rule, and tried their best to keep up the walls and to rally the frightened townsmen in their own defence. For the peaceable farmers and traders found it hard to train themselves in the strict, military discipline which had rendered the legions such a power. The Roman habits and customs, their ways of

building and farming gradually decayed, and the Christians slipped back into the old heathen practices, sacrificing furtively to the Sun or to some local forest god in the wild hill country. The great Wall in the north was broken down and overrun ; barbarous Picts and their Irish allies swarmed southwards and reached the midlands, plundering and burning the cities and slaughtering the feeble households of the farms and villas. Bravely the bishops tried to rally their poor terrified flocks, going out before them with the Cross to do battle and themselves fighting manfully to beat back the raiders as they did at the "Hallelujah" victory¹. They appealed in vain for help to the Roman Governor in Gaul, in a letter called "The Groans of the Britons," saying, "The barbarians drive us into the sea ; the sea drives us back to the barbarians ; between them we are exposed to two sorts of death ; we are either slain or drowned." Still the pagans came on. The story of St. Patrick tells how they ravaged a place in North Wales, killed the Decurion and carried off his son, little Patrick, to be a slave and herd

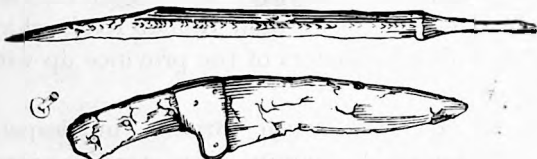
¹ Bede xx.

cattle in Ireland. Such things were happening every day all over the north and the midlands. Men shut themselves up within the four walls of a city and built up the wide gateways till there was only room for one man at a time to pass in or out. Lonely villas were abandoned, their treasures buried, and soon the vineyards and cornfields that had made Roman Britain one of the great granaries of the world were over-run with weeds and brambles, and grass began to grow between the stones of the straight Roman roads which had knit all quarters of the province up with Rome.

At last, the south Britons in despair, watching the barbarians draw steadily nearer to their last refuge, sent to the Angles and Saxons of the Continent for help, and in 449 A.D. the first Englishmen landed in Kent. It was at Stamford on the Welland that these new allies first did battle against the Picts and Scots, and no doubt the men of Cambridge sent a body of swordsmen to join them as they passed along the Ermine Street to the field of battle.

The English

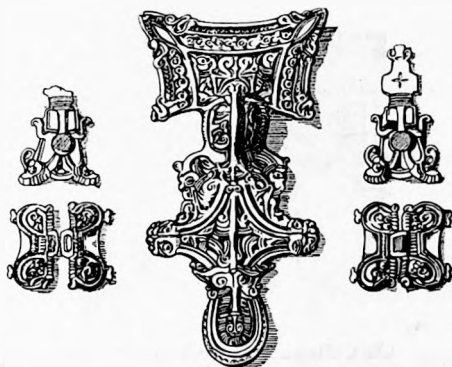
The English strangers wore sharp, narrow blades, which they called "seaxas." One was found at Barrington in 1890, and is now in the Archæological Museum. It is an iron dagger-blade, 12 inches long and two in breadth, almost straight, but pointed and grooved. There, too, are bronze and gilded brooches shaped like horses' faces, with which



Anglo-Saxon Seaxe, and Bull, found at Barrington, Cambridgeshire, in 1883 and 1887.

they fastened their plaids at the shoulder or neck, and the round bucklers they carried on the left arm. Those were made of wood or leather crossed with strips of iron or strengthened by great iron studs and bosses. As they marched along the paved street and looked out on the green pastures and shining waterways of Cambridge and Suffolk the English thought how easily they could sail

their light ships up into the heart of such a land, and how poor a fight the Britons were likely to put up. So when they had beaten the Picts they sent home for their kin, who came swarming in by the rivers Ouse and Yare and Thames.



*Fibula, and Pair of Clasps, with decorated plate set with silver discs,
from the Anglo-Saxon Cemetery, Barrington, Cambridgeshire, 1880.*

Where the Britons resisted their towns were burnt, and they themselves enslaved or driven back into those marsh refuges which had sheltered their early ancestors. The English would not live cooped up in towns, but set up their villages in the open country.

Beside the fords of the streams by which they had entered, in an open forest glade on the hillside, or on the sunny uplands from which they could overlook all the valleys, they reared their wooden huts and barns. Cutting



Old Collages, at Cherryhinton, Cambs.

down beeches or oaks to form upright "crucks or crutches," they set them 15 feet apart like the pillars of a church. A long straight trunk with the bark on, placed from one pair of crutches to another, formed the roof-tree, stout timber beams the rafters, and between the uprights hurdle-work of wattle daubed with straw-bound clay filled

in the gaps and soon dried hard. Then thatch was laid on the rafters from the well-cut gable of the roof-tree to the overhanging eaves, often no more than five or six feet from the ground, as you may see them still in parts of Germany. The daub was washed with blue or pink or yellow, and the pathway paved with rounded flints. While each man had his own cottage nestling in its toft or garden-patch apart from its neighbours, big barns and stables held the corn and cattle of the whole kin or patriarchal family group¹.

Such English villages would spring up in Norfolk and Suffolk as the Angles worked their way inland and southward to our own district ; also in the midlands where Mercians turned east till they reached the Cam. Each village had its cluster of huts, its warm meadow for the lambs and kine, its bit of plough-land and its rough pasture on the edge of moor or woodland. Beyond all the land of the tribe was the protecting " mark " or boundary, an earthen mound with quickset

¹ This seems to be implied in *Rectitudines Singularum Personarum*, see Bland, Brown and Tawney, *Select Docts. of Econ. Hist.*



North Doorway of Our Lady's Chapel, Stourbridge.

Between the two peoples, Mercian and Anglian lay the Fens and in them a remnant of the first men led a hunted life. Their hand was against every man, and the fair-haired Saxons, whom they ambushed at times and robbed, hated their dark, southern features, and called them "Black Devils" and "British Thieves." To the eastward of their haunts the North and South Folk formed the notable kingdom of East Anglia, under the Uffing, Redwald. At the court of his neighbour, Ethelbert of Kent, Redwald had met the monk from Rome, Augustine, and learned to worship Christ, and when Ethelbert died it was Redwald who took up his title of Bretwalda. But Redwald was only half a convert, for Bede tells us "in the same temple he had an altar for the sacrifice of Christ, and another small one to offer victims to devils." His son, too, was first heathen, then Christian, and for some years the kingdom was torn by the conflict between the old savagery and the creed of Peace. Redwald's second son, Sigebert, was driven to France, and there learned from the Frankish churchmen to love the new order.

Coming back to reign, he was followed by St. Felix of Burgundy, who was made the first bishop of East Anglia. With his help Sigebert, "being desirous to imitate the good institutions which he had seen in France, set up a school for boys to be taught in Letters."¹ Felix, no doubt, tried to convert British as well as Anglians, for he died at Soham, then a seaport, looking over the watery haunts of the Girvii, and there a monastery was built in his honour. Sigebert was an ardent servant of Christ, and when he had brought order and the new light of education into his kingdom he retired into a monastery hoping to end his days in peace. But he could not be spared. The Mercians had remained pagans, they made a raid across the Cam, and Sigebert came out from the peaceful cloister to stand by his people. Carrying no weapon but a stick, he helped his successor to rally them, and a stand was made, but in the fight both leaders were slain, and yet another of Redwald's descendants, Anna, became king. To confront the Mercian danger he chose as his

¹ Conybeare's *Cambridgeshire* p. 45.

homestead, Exning, a village lying on the western slopes of the downs, backed by the heath now called Newmarket, and overlooking the lines of the great Dykes that still formed the best barrier of defence to all East Anglia and were the scenes of many more great battles.

From Exning Anna ruled with sword and cross, "a good man and the father of an excellent family," but he too fell at last before the ceaseless onslaughts of the Mercians. They were the only pagans left in England, and the more furious on behalf of Woden and Thor. Their king Penda attacked one Christian king after another till he was supreme in the land. In 654 came the turn of East Anglia, and Anna, calling to his aid his son-in-law, Tonbert, lord of the South Girvii, maybe manned the Dykes with mixed troops of "British thieves" and Saxon Christians. No valour availed against the practised war-lord, Penda. He hurled his hordes over the defences "like a wolf, so that Anna and his folk were devoured in a moment." But this was the night "darkest before the dawn," and next year Penda was killed at Winwaed by an

allied force of the Christian kings, and Mercia itself was soon forced to lay down the old heathen faith and join the rest of England in the church.

Nowhere did Christian light shine out more brilliantly than in our Eastern land. Anna's "excellent family" were like stately columns upholding the holy church. One son, Erkenwald, was bishop in the old Roman city of London, guarding the Thames and the churchmen's route to Canterbury and Rome. His sisters ruled as abbesses of Barking and of Dereham, while two more, Sexburga and Ermenilda queened it in Kent and Mercia, the one carrying on the work of St. Augustine, the other strengthening the hands of St. Chad in his stern schooling of the Mercians. In France another sister, Sedrida, Abbess of Brie, set up schools to which many English girls went. Best known to us is the last of them all, St. Etheldreda. Married first to Tonbert, she received as dowry the fen-land of Ely, and on his death she became Queen of Northumbria. There at Whitby her aunt, St. Hilda, had founded a famous abbey, and was diligent in reviving Christianity, ravaged by Penda

Fired by her teaching, St. Etheldreda returned to build at Ely a house¹, which became the beacon-light of the fen-lands, a sanctuary and refuge for the oppressed through many centuries, and remains to-day one of the most lovely works of man.

At this time began to rise in Cambridgeshire and the surrounding country a ring of abbeys, centres both of religious scholarship and of wise farming lore, which gave this country-side a foremost place in English history. Ely, Peterborough, Thorney, Ramsey, and Crowland were the most famous. The intercourse which would grow between Ely and Brie is typical of the close contact of East Anglia with the most flourishing ports of France and Flanders for the next thousand years. The great waterway of the Fens and Wash was one with that of the North Sea, the Scheldt and Rhine. From 650 A.D. onwards the growing trade of the Frank and Flemish cities would supply the great, monastic houses of East Anglia. Costly embroideries, rich jewelled relics, gorgeously-bound books, spices and incense for the abbey

¹ Bede, chap. xix. and xx.

churches came over the Alps and down the Rhine stream from the Levant merchants, and so across the "Wide Sea," to be landed at Ely or Soham or Bottisham, or further up the



Saxon Food Vessel. Found at Barrington in
Cambridgeshire, in 1880.



Roman Vessels, found at Harston, Cambs.

inland water to Landbeach or the wharves of Cambridge itself. There the Irish boats too came in, their dark, Celtic boatmen wrapped

in heavy frieze cloaks and their monks bearing exquisitely decorated missals¹, richly enamelled ornaments and weapons and wonderful carved work to sell to their brethren of the South.

For Ireland was the land of gold, of fine art and most zealous devotion, the centre of learning and of the Faith. For four centuries it was from the green island of the western seas that the greatest missionaries and scholars went out to teach Christ to the barbarous Teuton, not in Britain only, but in Saxony, Flanders and Germany, till the days of Charlemagne. In Scotland and Wales their abbeys stood at Iona, at Bardsey, and at Lindisfarne, and all round the northern coasts their little ships plied fearlessly. Ely and her sister abbeys of Peterborough and Crowland were well-placed to receive and rest these ardent venturers for Christ and forward them on their dangerous missions over the North Sea. For their delicate and lovely goods the Anglians would give quantities of their rough pottery and strong basket-ware of the Fens,

¹ A fragment of St. Luke's Gospel in Corpus Christi Library is of Seventh Century Irish workmanship. The initial letters are most beautifully coloured and decorated with figures of birds intertwined into a plaited pattern

and store their ships afresh with fish and meat and corn from the abbey lands. So they would pass on to be the founders of the first bishoprics in Germany.

From A.D. 673 to 679 St. Etheldreda ruled in Ely and over the 300 square miles of half-submerged lands known as the Isle. Men of many races came to kneel at the shrine and to traffic, and so at a later time a fair sprang up. This went on year after year until in Norman days King Henry I. ordered all boats to go to Cambridge to unload, and then no doubt only the lighter trifles were carried to Ely, to St. Audrey's fair, and her name became the word for worthless, "tawdry" baubles.

But one solid relic of St. Audrey's reign remains, the stone base of a cross kept in Ely Cathedral. These words are cut upon it:—

"Lord, give Thy light and peace to Owen. Amen."

Till recently it stood in Haddenham. This Owen was St. Audrey's prime minister or Over-Alderman. His name is a British one and no doubt he ruled her Girvian people in the Fens. He lived, perhaps,

at Winford, and died in a monastery at Lichfield. Bede says "He fully forsook the things of this world, quitting all that he had, clad in a plain garment and carrying an axe and hatchet in his hand, . . . signifying that he did not enter the monastery to live idle, as some do, but to labour."¹ Such men in every abbey taught the Anglians to forsake war and roystering and to use the axe against their natural enemies of forest and fen, to labour and learn to turn the wild country into fertile farms.

No part of England was more productive and well to do than Cambridgeshire. The lands which the Romans had farmed were easy to clear and cultivate; the great abbeys followed the rules of the Benedictine houses abroad and their stewards organised great troops of peasants working on the level lands, growing corn and wine and herding sheep and pigs. Children were gathered to the monastery schools and taught useful crafts and trained in obedient diligence and reverence for holy men and things. Pilgrims and travellers passed along the ancient Way and

¹ See Conybeare, p. 54.

the Roman streets, slept at the abbey guest-house, marvelled at the rare glass windows of the churches, and told thrilling tales of adventure and miracle in return for the plentiful fare and home-made wine or ale of the religious hospices. The old Pilgrims' Way that winds over the hills from Walsingham to Bury and on through Ickenham still shows where the troops of travellers, pilgrims, merchants and soldiers passed. South-west beyond Cambridge St. Mary's chapel crowned and gave its name to the first line of hills as a landmark to guide the wayfarers towards the Ermine Street.

Now after Anna's day there was one ruler for all the kin of the English, Egbert of Wessex, and the men of Cambridge and East Anglia came in to him and had help of him against the men of Mercia in 825 A.D. Freed from that danger Cambridge began to grow. Each people had their own town and market-place, the Mercians on the fortified hillside, the Anglians on the patches of dry ground known as "hills" amid the marsh of the Eastern side. The gravel ridge, a mile or so wide, that runs from the Gogs to Magdalene Bridge,

was their main roadway, with houses on either side, then on Market Hill, Peas Hill and St. Andrew's Hill, three more clusters of huts soon ran into one town, while all around open marshy fields gave pasture and ploughland as far as Trumpington, Hinton and Ditton villages. The many ancient roads meeting at the ford brought traffic from the abbeys to meet the merchants riding up from London and the ships that unloaded at Magdalene Wharf, so Egbert gave the town the right to have a mint and make coins stamped with his device.

No doubt Cambridge like other villages had its Reeve and four good men to represent it, chosen by the Folkmoot; it is certain that the Hundred Moot was held



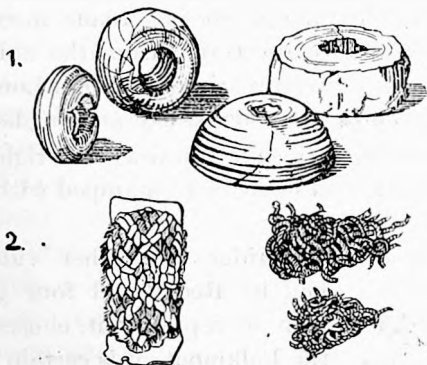
*Saxon Brooch, found
at Barrington, Cambs.*

here, which met at first by the Bridge.¹

Try to picture the Saxon place with its groups of tiny cottages, built of timber and hurdle-work daubed with mud, and thatched with straw or reeds. Here or there larger buildings, made of the same simple local means, are the common barns or may be

¹ See *Liber Eliensis*, p. 135.

known by the wooden cross or bell-turret for churches, and round them every day you may see monks dressed like the Italian peasants in rough woollen cloaks and hoods going in and out, building a new house for themselves or a hospice for travellers, showing some peasant



1. Anglo-Saxon Spindle Whorls from Barrington, Cambs.
2. Saxon woven material, enlarged, found in Cambridge.

from the hills how to fashion a plough or yoke, teaching the children to repeat their prayers, or two townsfolk how to calculate the value of the goods they would barter. On Sundays and feast-days the people flock to common worship. Many come long distances out of the fens, bringing with them the pots or

baskets they have made since the last feast, others come down from the hills with skins of wolves or wild-cats. After church they stand about offering these things in exchange for the salt some seaman has brought in or the flax the monks have been growing. So the churchyards become the market places, and men who live in the outlying hamlets look to Sunday as the one day of the week in which they can leave their labour of dyking or clearing the forest and meet their fellows, see the alderman presiding in the Moot to settle the last quarrel with the Mercians or bring their share of wheat or swine to pay tithe and house-penny as a freeman should.

All round the town the land lies open, without hedges or trees or houses. Some of it is being ploughed; by the many winding branches of the river are meadows of lush grass; further off in the plough-land ponies and small cattle are being kept together by a herd while they graze the rough grass and weedy stubble of the last year's harvest field. Away on the slopes of the hills herds of half wild pigs are rooting and munching under the trees and filling themselves with acorns and beechnuts.

Here and there a rough sledge or cart with solid wooden wheels bumps and rumbles along the old Roman street or makes its heavy way along some field track or "headland" to where the "hayward" guides a line of mowers. A few old thorn bushes give patches of shade where children roll and play in the short, trodden grass of the "balk" while their parents work at the crops, each on his own strips. In the clear water of the meres boys are bathing and swimming, disturbing the fishermen in their light skiffs of wicker and skin, or sending the waterfowl whirling up in a cloud only to circle and settle a little further off.

CHAPTER V.

The Danes

BUT while Cambridge began to draw the life of the countryside round its two towns, the coast of Anglia was overhung by a worse form of the danger that had always threatened it since the Roman Count had watched for pirates on the Saxon shore.

In 787 A.D. three ships, better manned and longer than any of the Saxon or English ones, but built like them narrow and light with high carved beak and stern and steered by a fixed stern oar, came lifting and falling over the crests of the North Sea. Watchmen, who first espied the coloured sails and strange Raven banner, ran hot-foot to warn the Reeve, whom the King had chosen to rule that country.

“Then the Reeve rode to the place, and would have driven them to the King’s town, because he knew not what men they were. And then and there did they slay him. These

were the first ships of Danish men that sought the land of Angle-kin.”¹

So without warning or parley began the first of the Norse raids, which were once more to make East Anglia and Cambridgeshire desolate. Fleet after fleet came on before the North-east wind and raced up the river mouths, the ships rowed by 30 or 40 oars apiece. The crews hauled up their boats and built or seized a stronghold on the higher ground, where they could be secure through the winter months; thence they would march out afoot or on captured horses, raid the great abbeys, sacking all their wealth and burning the fine stone and timber towers till they flared like beacons of disaster over the red-denied water of the Fens.

Thetford was commonly the headquarters of this pagan army, and from there they must have marched by Cambridge every time they would go inland either to York or the Midlands or over the Chiltern Hills to harry Bucks. and Hertfordshire and the soft Thames Valley. In 870 A.D. they rode back and martyred St. Edmund at Bury, “and trod

¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 787 A.D.

down all the land and brake down all the Minsters that ever they came to," even Ely not escaping. In 875 three of the Viking chiefs "sat down" in Cambridge "one whole year," until at last they were overpowered and had to "steal away" westwards into Dorsetshire. Three years later Alfred beat their host at Ethandune in the hills of Somerset near Athelney, baptized their leader, Guthrum, in the font at little Aller (pronounced Oller) by the Parrot and so made peace, dividing the land between them. Cambridge, lying just north of the boundary, the River Lea and Watling Street, fell to the share of the Lords Danes and was ruled by their Lagemen from the Moot place by the bridge.

In 905 A.D. Alfred's son Edward took arms again and drove the Danes northward from the Watling Street boundary, and here in Cambridgeshire his Kentish men, lingering under Siwulf the Alderman, and Kenwulf the Abbot, fought to a standstill on the Dykes, slaying the Danish King but losing their own leaders and the field of battle. Seven years later, Edward and his sister,

Ethelfled, Lady of the Mercians, gathered their joint strength and laid down sound plans of conquest. Marching steadily north-east, they gave battle again and again and won back stretch after stretch of the country ; built earthen strongholds to keep it secure ; planted new settlements of Wessex men as at St. Ives, and grouped the Hundreds in Counties round each of the reviving towns. And so at last in 921 A.D. " all the (Danish) host among the East Anglians swore to be at one with King Edward, that they would all that he would, and would hold peace toward all to whom the King should grant his peace, both by sea and land. And in especial did the host which owed fealty to Cambridge choose him to father and to lord ; and there-to swore oaths, even as he then bade it."

Each hundred in the new county of Cambridgeshire held some ten villages or " tithings," where each man was known to his neighbours and answerable to the whole village for any misdeed, as was the " tithing " itself to its fellow-villages and to the Hundred moot.

Cambridgeshire, Suffolk and Norfolk lay

apart from the rest of England, cut off by the waters, all but an island and hard to come at even from the south. While loyal to Edward's heirs, these counties lived a life of their own and their Hundred moots seem to have sent men to a Witan of their own,¹ which every freeman might attend from all East Anglia, though few probably troubled to take long journeys to do so. At the Witan presided an Alderman for all three shires, the most famous being Brithnoth. The Ramsey Chronicler tells how this hero marched out to his last battle with the Danes at the Blackwater in Essex. On the way he refused to take food unless the men of his hearthward or bodyguard could share it. "I cannot fight without my men, neither will I feed without them." The battle is recorded in the famous saga called "The song of Maldon." They had reached the place of battle, and Brithnoth dismounted to fight among his men on foot as Saxons did, when the Vikings sent a messenger to demand ransom:—

"Thy realm mayest thou ransom
By sending the Seamen,

¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1004 A.D.

To their own full doom (*i.e.* terms),
Gear and gift.
Then back with our booty
To ship will we get us,
Fare forth on the flood
And pass you in peace."

Brithnoth answered as a true Englishman :—

"Hear thou, sailor,
What saith this people,
For ransom we give you
Full freely our weapons,
Spear-edge and sword-edge
Of old renown.

This bode in return
Bear back to thy shipmates,
This word of high warning,
That here stand undaunted
A chief with his chosen :
This land will we fight for,
For Ethelred's realm,
For our King, folk, and country.

Then waded the water
Those wolves of the slaughter
Nor stayed them the stream :
Pressed over Panta (Blackwater)
The Vikings' war :
O'er the wan waterway
Weapons they waved,
Their shields to shore
The shipmen bore."

The fight was bitter; the Danes were so badly mauled that they made off without waiting for more "ransom," but Brithnoth fell, and his faithful hearthward bore his headless body back to Ely. There they had rested and feasted on their way out, and Brithnoth had repaid the Abbot's hospitality by princely gifts, the grant of jurisdiction over many villages of his in Cambridgeshire. Among them were Trumpington, Teversham, Trip-low, Fulbourn, Hardwicke, Impington, Croxton, Soham, and Papworth. His widow gave a golden collar and a tapestry record of his deeds to the abbey, and there his tomb can still be seen. It was King Alfred who had revived Ely after the Danish raids, sending eight monks to repair one aisle of the old church, and this served nineteen years later as a refuge to the whole country-side. King Sweyn had come to take vengeance for the treacherous massacre of his subjects on St. Brice's Day. The men of Cambridge made a heroic stand at Ringmere, and the King punished it by a merciless harrying of the whole district with fire and sword.

In 1010 A.D., "while all England shook"

before Sweyn "as a reedbed rustling before the wind," Ulfcytel, "the Ready," Brithnoth's successor as Alderman, rallied the forces of whom the Danes themselves had said in 1004 that "never worse hand-play had they met in England"; he stood against them at Ringmere, but his forces broke; "Soon fled the East English. Then stood fast Grantabrygshire alone"; so fast stood they and so worthily that "while English kings rule, the praise of Cambridgeshire shall flourish." But no one shire could long withstand a king's host, and the Danes took the fiercer vengeance, riding throughout the district for three weary months, destroying all save Ely, safe behind her floods. Cambridge was sacked and burnt. "And they even went into the wild fens, and there they destroyed men and cattle and burned throughout the fens. What could be moved that did they lift, what they might not carry that did they burn . . . and so marched they up and down the land."¹ Of all the villages none suffered more than Balsham, small and remote as it was. The old church tower still

¹ See Ingulf. *History of Croyland*.

stands with the narrow winding stairway on which one man barricaded himself safely, only to find when the raiders rode off that all



Saxon Bronze-gilt Disc, set with five garnets etc. Found at Allington Hill, Six Mile Bottom Cambridgeshire.

his kinsfolk were slain or enslaved, and he alone remained of the whole ham. At Barrington fierce fighting seems to have held the

ford across the Cam, for there were found in 1875 skeletons of men and horses, a "seaxe," shield-bosses, swords, daggers, spearheads, a green glass brooch with the Danish snake-headed raven cut upon it, and a bronze charm with Saracenic characters such as the Danes wore, and which are still found from time to time in places where they lived in England. The final battle of Assandun, in which Edmund Ironside was defeated, was perhaps fought at Ashdon on the borders of Cambridgeshire.

The Danes, after harrying Mercia, had made off towards the ships they had left in the Thames estuary; but Edmund, guided perhaps by the monks of Ely,¹ who would have watched the line of smoking villages left in the enemy's wake, made hard after them, and overtook them by the rising Bourne. There the king charged under his royal banner and the Golden Dragon flag of Wessex. "Brandishing his good sword, he clove like a thunder-bolt the Danish battle-line," but some felon raised the cry "Flet Engle," Dead is Edmund," and started a

¹ See *Liber Eliensis*, p. 196.

panic. "Thus did he betray his King and Lord and the whole people of Angle-kin. There did the whole English nation fight against him ; and there had Cnut the victory. There was slain Bishop Ednoth (of London) . . . and Ulfcytel of East Anglia. . . . And all the nobility of the English nation was there undone."¹ In 1020 A.D. Cnut built at Assandun "a minster of stone and lime, for the souls of the men who were there slain."² For Cnut was Christian and a good king, and befriended Ely though the monks had gone against him at Assandun. Many stories are told of his love of Ely ; of his song :—

Merry sang the monks in Ely
As Cnut, king, rowed there by.
"Steer lads near the land
And hear we the monks chant."

Merie sungen the Muneches binnen Ely
Da Cnut ching reu ther by.
"Roweth cnites noer the land
And here we ther Muneches saeng."

Of his love of attending the services at Ely the quaintest tale is told.

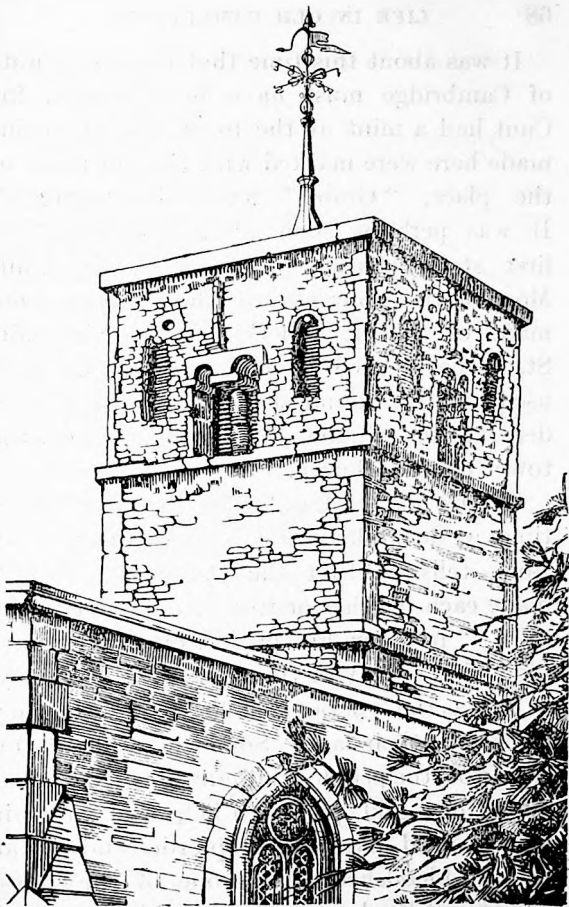
The Feast of the Purification was at hand. Cnut was at Soham and could not get through

¹ *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1016.

² *Canterbury Chronicle*.

to Ely by reason of the unusual frost and ice. "The water of the marshes was frozen. His good mind would not change, but he was anxious and groaning. He thought, trusting in the Lord God, to cross the mere from Soham to Ely in a sledge if the hard frost did not stop, but that he would make the rough journey with more safety and with less fear if someone should go before him. Now by chance there stood by in the crowd a great hulking man from the Isle, one Brihtmer Budde, so called from his thickness. He offered to go before the king. They crossed safely, and Cnut constantly told the story, and praised God for the wonder that so great and bulky a rustic should make not the least stumble on the way, so that he himself, being both active and of small size, could follow straight on without fear." So pleased was he that he called Brihtmer to his presence and granted the serf freedom and possession of his hut and land for ever; and the Ely monk who tells the tale says "his children's children live there free and in peaceable possession to this day."¹

¹ *Liber Eliensis*, p. 203.



The Tower of S. Benet's Church, Cambridge.

It was about this time that the burnt huts of Cambridge must have been rebuilt, for Cnut had a mint at the town, and the coins made here were marked with the old name of the place, "Grant" for "Grantebrigge." It was perhaps soon after this that the first stone church, St. Benet's, was built. Most of the churches of those days were made of timber, and the masons who built St. Benet's tried to make the stone they used into the round shape of turned logs to decorate the windows, as you may see in the tower of that church.

Of the life of Cambridge in later Saxon times we do not know much, though Domesday Book tells us that the Confessor's Sheriff made each burgher or free householder in the town "pay for his protection three days' ploughing yearly or the value of it in money, as well as the "heriot" of 20s. paid when they came into their land. Somewhere about this time, too, the people of standing, called thanes, joined in a gild, partly to help each other in time of need, partly to keep order and put an end to bloodshed. It is one of the oldest gilds in all England, and Cambridge may well

be glad to have the record of some of its rules.

Gild of Thanes of Cambridge

“ Here in this writing is the declaration of the laws which the members of the Gild of Thanes at Granta-brycge have resolved upon.

THE FIRST is that each give his oath to the others on the sacrament of fidelity before God and before the world, and the whole society shall (up)hold him that has most right.

If any member die let the whole gildship bring him (for burial) to the place he chooses, and he who does not come thereto shall pay a syster¹ of honey ; and the gildship shall pay half of the expense of the funeral feast of the departed ; and each shall give twopence² in alms, and as much of the sum collected as is right shall be offered at St. Atheldritha's.

And if any member have need of the assistance of his fellow members, and it be told the reeve nearest that member, in the case of the member not being near, and the reeve neglect it he shall pay a pound. And if the Lord (of the gild) neglect it he shall pay a pound, unless he be on Lord's need³ or be very sick.

If anyone kill a member let the fine be not less than eight pounds. Then if the slayer refuse to pay the fine let all the gildship avenge the member and every one bear his share. If one do it⁴ let all bear equally. And

¹ A syster is probably 15 pints.

² The penny was worth about 3d.

³ On business of his office.

⁴ i.e. if one does vengeance.

if any member slay a man and he be needy and he must make compensation for his deed, and the slain man be a man of twelve hundred shillings,¹ let each member give half a mark² to help him. If the man slain be a ceorl let each give two oras,³ if a Welshman⁴ one ora. If the member slay any one by wrong and by folly let himself bear the consequence of what he has done. And if a member slay his fellow member by his own folly let him satisfy the kinsman himself, and buy again his place in the gild with eight pounds, or lose for ever the right of fellowship and fraternity. And if any member eat or drink with him who has slain his fellow member unless it be in the presence of the king,⁵ or of the bishop of the province, or of the aldermen, he shall pay a pound, unless he can make it appear by two witnesses that he did not know him.

If any member abuse another let him pay a syster of honey, and if anyone abuse one not a member, let him pay one syster of honey, unless he can clear himself by his two witnesses.

If a servant draw his sword let his lord pay a pound and the lord may have it as he can, and let all the gildship help him that he recover his money. And if a servant wound another, let the lord (of the wounded) avenge it, and let the whole gildship inquire that he have not life.

And if a servant waylay a man he shall pay a syster of

¹ *i.e.* of weregild rated at 1,200 shillings, but its value varied constantly.

² Mark = 13/4.

³ Ora was of two kinds 16 pence and 20 pence.

⁴ Welsh commonly used for British, *i.e.* non-Saxon.

⁵ Wherever the king went his "peace" went with him and thus gave sanctuary.

honey, and if anyone have a foot-setting he shall do the same.

And if any member die or be sick abroad his fellow members shall fetch him and bring him dead or alive whither he wishes, under the same penalty as has been named. If he die at home the member who does not go to fetch his body, and the member who does not attend his morrow speech, shall pay his syster of honey."

Some of these rules are not easy to understand. "Let the whole gildship inquire that he have not life" seems to mean that they are to set justice to work to punish the crime with death. The word foot-setting is probably used for "trap" or "snare"; and the "morrow speech" is no doubt a meeting held in praise of the dead. We do not know the later history of this gild, but it is tempting to guess that it was the germ of the ruling group known as "the men of Cambridge" since it was made up of the thanes.

Not long before this, about the year 930, a law had been made that "If any man fare three times over the Wide Sea (? North Sea) by his own means, he shall be ofthane-right worthy," and it may be that some of these Cambridge thanes had risen in this way. A gild of water-merchants ruled at this time in Paris, which

still uses their seal of a sailing ship ; perhaps our gild of thanes did the same for Cambridge.

Many gilds arose in the next three centuries, and every one of them was under the guardianship of some holy saint. For the Church took care to guide and help men in all their doings, and no man would have dared to do without its help, not even the king. In this way the Church had learned to make good rules and plans, and it is no doubt partly from such bodies as the gilds, and partly from having to judge of fair-play in the Moots that Saxon townsmen learned to manage their own town affairs. The Church had practised managing matters for nearly six hundred years in Italy and France and the countries of the Mediterranean before St. Augustine came to England, so his followers could aid the Saxon kings to write down their best customs as laws or "dooms," and to plan their councils. These little bands of peaceable townfolk joining together against any troubles that might come upon them, illness or fire or raiding pirates or plundering barons must have learned that "union is strength," and the Church sanctioned and guided the clubs they formed, and

encouraged them to meet in the churches. Gilds were formed to do neighbourly work, to feast together or walk in procession in honour of their saint or founder ; to say services and hear masses for one who died, care for his burial, put together money for his widow, and look after his children ; also they made rules that work should be carefully and honestly done, and no man defrauded of what was due to him.

CHAPTER VI.

The Norman Years

ALREADY we have traced a number of changes in the life of Cambridge. We come now to the greatest, the Norman conquest; each left some mark in the customs and character of the people here as in the rest of England, and this the most. The wide, well-managed villa-farms of the Romano-British had been covered up by the free villages of the Saxon kin with their lands owned and tilled in "common" fields. These again were mastered in part by the Vikings, and the Dane law governed all the towns north of Watling Street, making them more eager for trade and shipping than other parts. The English "earls" yielded to Danish "jarls" of higher standing, and when Edward the Confessor died, Jarl Gyrth, Godwin's son was ruler of all East Anglia, and led his housecarls to his brother Harold's aid at Hastings, only to fall beside him. We know little in detail of the doings of Cambridge folk in the first years

of the Conquest except that the reason William built one of his new castles, probably of earth and timber, on the hilltop was, as Fuller says, "that it might be a checkbit to curb this country which otherwise was so hard-mouthed to be ruled." This was done as he marched homewards in 1068 from his stern handling of rebellious Yorkshire. Now as of old to hold the Cam bridge-way was to grip the key of this country-side, and William was too good a king to miss it. Two years later, however, Ely became the City of Refuge for all who withstood him. In 1070 A.D. "came King Sweyne from Denmark¹ into the Humber. . . . Then came into Ely Christien, the Danish bishop, and Earl Osbern, and the Danish domestics with them ; and the English people from all the fen-lands came to them, supposing that they should win all that land. Then the monks of Peterborough heard say, that their own men would plunder the minster ; namely Hereward and his gang ; because they understood that the king had given the abbacy to a French abbot, whose name was Thorold. . . . Then came they in

¹ Not to be confused with Cnut's father.

through fire at the Bullhithe Gate ; where the monks met them and besought peace of them. But they regarded nothing. They went into the minster, climbed up into the holy rood, took away the diadem from our Lord's head, all of pure gold, and seized the bracket that was under His feet, which was all of red gold. They climbed up into the steeple, brought down the table that was hid there, which was all of gold and silver, seized two golden shrines, and nine of silver, and took away fifteen large crucifixes, of gold and of silver ; in short, they seized there so much gold and silver, and so many treasures, in money, in raiment, and in books, as no man could tell another ; and said, that they did it from attachment to the minster."¹ The next year "went Earl Morkar to Ely by ship ; but Earl Edwin was treacherously slain by his own men. Then came Bishop Aylwine, and Siward Barn, and many hundred men with him, into Ely." They crowded in across the marshes to the little island, ten miles long by five wide, and found there abundance of food in the corn and cattle of the Abbey, the

¹ See *Anglo-Saxon Chronicle*, 1070.

stags, goats, hares, fish and fowl of all kinds that the island produced. A Norman knight whom they captured told afterwards how they fared. "In the eddies at the sluices of these meres are netted innumerable eels, large water-wolves, with pickerels, perches, roaches, burbots, and lampreys, which we call water-snakes. There you find geese, teal, coot . . . herons and ducks, more than men can number. . . . I have seen a hundred—nay, even three hundred—taken at once, sometimes by birdlime, sometimes in nets or snares."¹

Thus stored with food of all sorts and surrounded by the great, natural moat of the Fens, Ely made a first-rate stronghold. The monk Thomas of Ely, who tells the story, says, "King William, when he knew that most strong fighter, Hereward to be there, gathered exceeding much valour to fight against them, and devised evil against the holy place and how to ruin it." With his boats-carls he came up the Ouse to Brandon and Reach on the east to beset the Isle, "with a host which no man could number," while on the south he had others to try to make a causeway over

¹ *Liber Eliensis*, p. 232.

the marsh with faggots and sandbags from Willingham to Aldreth. But Hereward led sallies out against them, drove them off and bore back much spoil into the Isle. "When the king heard that he was wroth and commanded to summon the strong and brave from all the townships and towns to hunt them out." These Hereward again beat off, and then the king's great men came to him and said, "'Let us make peace with yonder men; for the place which we beset is fortified and we do not prevail against them: according to the traditions of their fathers have they borne themselves against us. And the word was pleasing in the eyes of the King and of his princes: he sent to them to make peace.' . . . But the English outlaws hardly trusted him, and soon claimed that he had broken faith with some of their friends and the struggle began again. Once more William tried his plan of a causeway, 'he ordered all kinds of things to be thrown in, many trees and faggots not a few, with sheepskins scraped and filled with sand,' but this time when his soldiers rushed on to it, eager to get at the rich plunder of the abbey, it gave way under

them and many were drowned or choked in the mud. Then the story tells that a sorceress was brought and set in a tower to hearten the troops by her incantations. Now Hereward did a brave thing. He wanted to find out their plans, so taking his pet mare, Swallow, who always looked awkward and flagging, but was of fine breed, extraordinary speed and active to endure long lasting work, he dressed up as a potter. He cropped his long, thick hair and beard, put on the pale clay-smear'd smock and took the earthenware pots. That evening he got to the witch's house and she took him in, thinking him a poor man. He spent the night there and could have killed her but wanted to hear the plans she was making. In the morning he slung the pots on his shoulders again and went along, shouting out "Pots, pots, good pots and bowls: earthenware of all sorts and the best make," and so made his way to the quarters of the king. Then he was taken by the king's servants into the kitchen, where they bought pots. Where amongst others present was a reeve from the neighbourhood, who swore that he had never seen anyone

looking more like Hereward. And when he said so busybodies and hangers-on ran up from all directions to spy and make up their minds whether it really was Hereward or a man like him, and this story became known in the Hall among the pages and nobles. And looking hard at him they would not believe that clumsy countryman to be Hereward and denied it. He stood like a stupid and made no reply to those who questioned him in French, although he understood it very well. For they asked if he had sometimes seen or known that rascal. To whom at last he gave this answer in English: Would that that man of Belial were here now, hateful to me in everything; I might be well avenged of him. For he himself stole my one cow and four sheep so that I am forced miserably to beg and thrown into such great misery that I can scarcely carry on a wretched life by means of this mare and the pots, with great shame and toil.

“ And while this bickering was going on, one came from the king’s presence and ordered them to hasten the king’s meal; on which account the wrangling died down meanwhile.

But before long the cooks and riff-raff eating and drinking got thoroughly drunk, and noticing Hereward, thought him a dolt ; so they seized him with his pots all round him, blindfolded him and drove him on to them to smash them. Then thumping him with their fists they tried cruelly to pull out the hair on his chin and by way of a game to shave his head. But it hardly happened as they expected, they soon paid the forfeit. At this point, when try as he might he could no longer keep his temper, one of them hit him on the head, whom in return he gave back a blow under his ear so that he fell as if dead. When his comrades saw that, all fell upon him with prongs and forks, and he, seizing a stake from the hearth, defended himself against them all, one being killed and many wounded. He was seized, dragged out and made over to the guard. And whilst he was kept under guard, there came a man carrying fetters in one hand to bind him and a drawn sword in the other : which Hereward striking from his hand seized and quickly slew him with his own weapon and wounded the others. And so escaping by the fence he found his

mare and mounted her, and as she galloped off the crowd of lads tried to pursue her ; but her great speed plunged him with her into the wood of Sumersham and by the light of the moon he came by night into the Isle and set his armed men where ever there were convenient points, lest by chance any trouble from the enemy should come upon them unawares.

Now when the king, returning home knew of this, he applauded Hereward's unconquerable courage, giving orders positively that if he were at any time seized he should be kept unharmed." ¹

Another story is told of him by Gaimar, in quaint old Norman-French verses, like this:—

Then the king bade
Build a bridge over marsh ;
Said he would slay all
None should escape him.
When these knew it in Ely
They put them at his mercy ;
All went crying for mercy
Save Hereward, right bold.
He fled with few folk
Geri with him, his kinsman,
With them were five comrades.

¹ *Liber Eliensis*, pp. 23^e-6.

A man who brought fish
To the guards along the marsh
Played the true man and courteous
In his boat took them,
With reeds and flags hid them
Towards the guards began rowing
As evening grew dusk,
Nigh their camp in his boat.

The French were in a tent
Guy the Sheriff, their captain,
He knew well the fisher,
Knew well 'twas he coming,
Of him none took notice.
They saw the fisher rowing,
'Twas night, they sat eating.

From the boat came forth Hereward,
Bold as a leopard ;
His comrades came after
Made for the tent through a covert,
With them followed the fisher.
Hereward was erst his Lord.

How shall I tell it ? the knights
Were surprised at their meal.
Grasping axes entered those,
They were no fools at striking
Slew twenty-six Normans,
Twelve English were slain there.

Great the fear through the dwellings,
All shared in the flight,

Left horses all saddled,
The Outlaws sprang on them,
Each chose a rare, good horse.
The wood was near, they entered it,
They went not at random,
Knew well all that country,
Had many their friends there.
At a town that they came to
Found ten of their party.
These joined them to Hereward.
Erst were they eight, now were ten more.
Eighteen were the comrades.
Before they passed Huntingdon
Had a hundred well-armed men
Of Hereward's liege vassals,
They were his men and faithful.
Ere the morn's sun was risen
Seven hundred had joined him
They followed to Brunswald.¹

By such deeds of rare daring and craft
Hereward kept up the courage of the English
and beat off and disheartened William's
Norman vassals. But the monks of Ely
grew weary of the rough life. They knew
too that the Holy Father at Rome had blessed
the king's banner when he set out, and being
loyal churchmen and learned clerks they

¹ Gaimar's *Chronicle of Hereward* contains many other stories, mainly legendary. Gaimar, *Lestorie des Engles*, vol. ii. (see "*Rerum Britannicarum*.")

held it wrong to resist the Lord's Anointed. So they sent word to William that they would submit to him and do his will, and they showed him a way across the marshes. His men followed it, and entered Ely, and Hereward was forced to flee. For some years he wandered as an outlaw, but William had always praised his gallant spirit, and at last it is said that he made friends with him and promised that he should hold his lands in peace.

CHAPTER VII.

Mediaeval Cambridge

IN the fight for Ely, Cambridge was the King's headquarters, and Castle Hill must have swarmed with the barons and their vassals, called in from "all the townships and towns," with all the supplies too and the serfs who had to bring them; the busscarls or boatmen forced to do service by water when the king summoned them; the machines of siege and heavy wagons to draw them. The Cam would be crowded with boats, rafts of timber and faggots for the causeway, and barges heavy laden with goods for the camp. No doubt all this brought some wealth to the burghers, and about this time some of the oldest buildings began to rise. William's first Castle was most likely a timber one, of two or three stories, no wider than a church tower. It was probably set up on the green mound that is still there, made by William's men to bear it. The bottom story would be built of solid logs with no door or windows.

The entrance would be in the second storey, to which men would climb up by a ladder or sloping plank that could be drawn up after them in case of attack. The ground floor was used only as a cellar or "Donjon" to store food or prisoners in, and gave that



Castle Hill, Cambridge,
with the Keep suggested.

name to the whole tower. By the end of his reign William had begun to build stronger towers of stone, called keeps, but these were often too heavy for the earthen mounds, which gave way under them. Perhaps that

¹ After the plan of Bramber Castle, by C. Ashdown. "Castles in their Glory" series.

was why the Keep of Cambridge Castle was built afterwards below and a little to the north of the motte or mound. A great Gatehouse was also built on the Huntingdon Road, and four smaller towers between them. These were all joined to one another by stone walls known as "curtains." The Borough covered the whole hilltop from Mt. Pleasant to Chesterton Lane. In the outer Bailey, or close about the Castle walls would cluster the huts of the villeins and serfs who gave their crops or their labour for the right to their land and to shelter in case of need. Their houses would be of wattle and daub, probably one room only with holes for window or chimney, thatched and surrounded with tiny gardens of herbs. The boundary of the Castle area where Histon Road begins was marked in later days by a stone Cross known as "the High Stone Cross at Castle End." All this part of Cambridge was sometimes called "the Borough," and the oldest houses in the place are still to be found there, such as "The Old White Horse" and "The Three Tuns Inn."

From this high point Cambridgeshire was ruled by the King's Sheriff, called Picot. He

had been made lord of Bourn, and other manors. He or his successor is thought to have built the old Manor Hall, now called Merton Hall. It was the sort of house used by the Norman gentry everywhere, one long room with stone pillars, $15\frac{1}{2}$ ft. apart, four on each side, dividing it into nave and aisles; one end was marked off by screens for the kitchen, and at the other end an alcove built out at right angles was the private parlour, or "soler" of the Lord and Lady. The hall was raised on vaulted cellars where stores and cattle could be kept, and so the entrance was by some stone steps forming a short outside stair. In the one great room the whole life went on; men worked, played, fed, and slept there, and the women too. Like the smaller houses it would have no chimney, but a hole in the centre of the roof over the great hearth, though this was covered later by a little turret or "louver" with open sides, such as you may see in the Hall of Queens' or Peterhouse. Old pictures shew the Hall with a thatched and gabled roof, and in old days it was common for churches to be roofed with thatch; instances are still to be

seen at Long Stanton and at Ickenham, in Suffolk.

Before the Conqueror's reign ended, the great reckoning was made of all the land and property in the country which could pay anything into the King's treasury : we know



Thatched Church; Longstanton Saint Michael's.

it as Domesday Book. The monk who wrote the story of Hereward gives this account of it : " He (William) laid an unbearable tribute on the English and ordered an account of the whole of England in that year, how much land each of his barons was holding, what

knights holding in fee, what hides, what villeins, what beasts, yea, what live cattle each man possessed in his whole kingdom from the greatest to the least, how much each taxable holding paid; and the land was vexed with many mischiefs by reason of these doings. And terror and distress such as were not from the beginning arose in all men's minds. And in that day all nature was grieved, strife waxed among men, pestilence among beasts, ruin and famine in the land."¹

The century after the Conquest must have changed the look of Cambridge more than any later one. Besides the Castle and stone Manor house the Normans reared several other beautiful buildings. The most famous for many years was Barnwell Priory, and in the history of its life we can see a picture of what monks were doing all over England at this time.

Barnwell Priory

IN 1092, Hugolina, the wife of Picot the Sheriff, lay grievously ill. Her husband prayed with her for her recovery, and together they vowed

¹ *Liber Eliensis*, p. 228.

if she were given health to found a house for six Augustine Canons and dedicate it to Saint Giles. In a few days the Lady was well, and the vow was soon redeemed, St. Giles' being built just below the Castle mound between Chesterton and Huntingdon Way.

But Robert, their son, when his father died, was accused of joining in a plot to murder King Henry I. ; so he fled from the land, and his place and the office of sheriff were given to Pain Peverel, who had carried the standard of Duke Robert of Normandy on his crusade. Peverel wished to add to the number of the Canons, and "perceiving that the site on which their house stood was not large enough for all the buildings needful to his Canons, and was devoid of any spring of fresh water, Pain Peverel besought King Henry to give him a certain site beyond the Borough of Cambridge, extending from the highway to the river, and sufficiently agreeable from the pleasantness of its position. Besides, from the midst of that site there bubbled forth springs of clear, fresh water, called at that time, in English, Barnewelle, the Children's Springs—because once a year,

on St. John Baptist's Eve, boys and youths met there, and amused themselves in the English fashion with wrestling matches and other games, and applauded each other in singing songs and playing on musical instruments. Hence by reason of the crowd of boys and girls who met and played there, a habit grew up that on the same day a crowd of buyers and sellers should meet to do business. There too a man of great sanctity called Godesone used to lead a solitary life, having a small wooden oratory that he had built in honour of Saint Andrew. He had died a short time before, leaving the place without any habitation on it, and his oratory without a keeper."

King Henry granted Peverel 13 acres of land round about the springs, and in 1112 the Canons were removed from St. Giles and a new church begun with "ponderous workmanship" in the Norman style. In 1122 Pain died, and his son "William was not so eager for the building of the church as his father had been, but went to the Holy Land and presently died there."¹

¹ J. W. Clark, *Camb. Antiquarian Soc., Proc.* XXXIII.

The ponderous Norman church was never continued, but the Priors had built a lighter one, which was finished by the 5th Prior and Everard de Beche in 1190 and consecrated to St. Giles and St. Andrew, and in the next half century the 9th Prior "built the frater and the farmery, the great guest hall, the granary, the bakehouse and brewhouse, the stable for horses (oxen were still used for ploughing, but men travelled on horseback), the inner and outer Gatehouse and the walls of the new work . . . almost to the top. He finished the chapel of St. Edmund and covered it with lead." Barnwell became one of those great church houses that were centres of life for farmers and lay folk, merchants as well as priests. But in the Middle Ages men might not carry on trade unless they had received leave by charter from their lords, or could shew that to do so was an old custom. The buying and selling which had grown up at the Barnewelle on Midsummer Eve became a great fair, but it does not seem to have been formally licensed by the King till John reigned, though the canons had increased it year by year.

Another noble building of Norman Cambridge was the Round Church of which we still have the nave, with its beautiful doorway covered with (restored) Norman mouldings, and its short columns of workmanship as ponderous as Peverel's. It was probably built between 1120 and 1140 by Ralph the Bearded and the Brothers of the Holy Sepulchre, an order of fighting monks like the Templars, whose church in London it resembles in plan. They are both plainly the work of men who had been to the East and seen there the church of the Holy Sepulchre after which they are named.

Cambridge was still a tiny place when Domesday Book was written. It contained 10 wards but only 373 dwellings. On the northern side 27 houses had been pulled down to clear a site for William's castle. Picot too, the Sheriff, had made himself hated by pulling down houses and seizing common land to build himself three mills, by Silver Street. He added heavily to the dues, the three days' ploughing became nine, and the "heriot"¹ "eight pounds, a palfrey, and a

¹ Heriot.—A forced gift made by the heir on taking up his father's lands, probably a survival of the old practice of giving stock with land.

complete suit of knightly armour." Besides having to take their corn to his mills to be ground the people felt the Conquest in other ways. The native English Thanes are not spoken of in Domesday; they seem to have died or been made villeins. Norman knights are in their places. William of Malmesbury, the chronicler of the Conquest, laments: "Now is England become the home of foreigners, the hold of strangers; not one Englishman is there now left who is either Earl, Bishop or Abbot; strangers be they all"; and this seems truer of Cambridgeshire than of other parts, for the struggle of Hereward's men met punishment by outlawry and dispossession. Many of the foreign lords had greater lands elsewhere; and it is said that Cambridgeshire "from that day to this has been singularly lacking in 'county' families."

The growth of the town may have owed much at this time to the "King's Jews." The Jewry was opposite the Round Church in the angle of the High Ward formed by Trinity Street and Sidney Street. Jews, accursed by crusaders and scattered throughout the world, held together then as now like the members of

one clan, and were always ready to stand by one another or combine forces and funds in pursuit of their trade. This unity and their cleverness with money made them the bankers of the Middle Ages ; kings and other rulers found them the best agents for raising large sums in sudden cases of need, and took them under their special protection. Jews were the only men who had capital, and when Henry I.'s writ made Cambridge the one port of the county they no doubt lent large sums to the traders and merchants, and their chambers would be filled with their bonds. Englishmen are never ready to welcome foreigners and the Church then taught them to abhor Jews ; as money-lenders and sharp creditors these had a third claim to envy and malice, and the king's protection must have been often needed when the servility of the poor Jew or the arrogance of the rich one angered their burly English debtors and neighbours. Jews were the King's servants, and it was from the King, Henry III., that the burghers acquired the house of a rich Jew, called Benjamin, for a town gaol. Jews were

among the first to build stone houses in England.

The life of Cambridge was further enriched in Henry the First's reign by the founding of the Nunnery of St. Mary and St. Rhadegund. This was at first a little cell by the riverside where a handful of devout women took refuge from the world about 1133, just before the troublous times of Stephen. Almost at the same date the Hospital of St. John was built by Henry Frost, a burgess, for a Master and Brethren of the Augustine Order to care for the sick and poor townsmen. The old hospital has given place to St. John's College, where its foundations are still to be seen, and in Jesus College part of St. Rhadegund's Church and Nunnery remain to form what some think the most interesting of all college chapels. King Stephen granted to the nuns the right to hold a fair in the town, and it soon got the name of Garlic Fair.

In the Jewry and opposite Jesus Lane stood the church of All Saints, while a second, "All Saints by the Castle," stood across the river till at the time of the Black Death it was deserted, became ruinous, and the haunt of

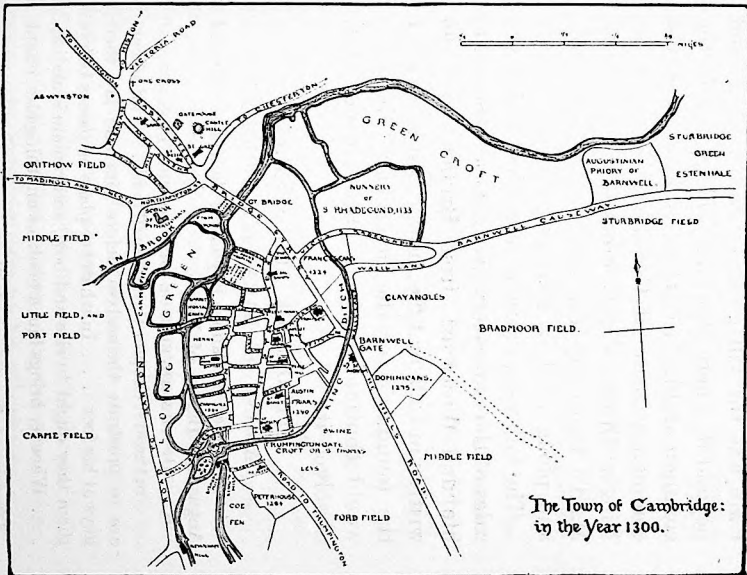
wild beasts. On the north of the bridge, too, were the Norman churches of St. Giles and St. Peter. Two ancient arches have been kept in St. Giles, one of them the Norman chancel arch blessed by the great and meek St. Anselm, and a Norman font is in St. Peter's. These would be the churches that suffered at the hands of a brigand baron in Stephen's reign, who posed as a friend of Matilda, and against whom Stephen built a stronghold at Burwell, of which only the foundations can now be seen. This Galfrid de Mandeville raided the countryside, sacking Cambridge, and "not sparing even the churches." He was shot through the head when attacking the fort of Burwell, and died "excommunicate and unabsolved, nor was the earth suffered to give a grave to the sacrilegious offender."¹

¹ Conybeare, *Cambridgeshire*, p. 114.

CHAPTER VIII.

Monks and Friars

IN Cambridge of the Middle Ages three main streets led south and east. Bridge Street linked Huntingdon Road with the main road to Colchester, known as Hadstock Way, with Barnwell Gate where the Post Office now stands. Westwards from Bridge Street one might turn aside at the Jewry into High Ward to reach Trumpington Gate; while nearer still to the river ran Milne Street serving the Sheriff's and King's mills, and traceable now in the lanes on which Trinity Hall and Queens' College open. Beyond the Gates were the common fields of the southern town, which was fortified by a moat or watercourse, always known as The King's Ditch, for all waters not private were the King's. Starting from the King's Mill in Mill Lane it ran by way of Pembroke Street and St. Andrew's Street to Christ's, and so to Park Street and into the river opposite Magdalene. It took the place of the walls which surrounded



most mediæval towns. Outside Trumpington Gate was the village of Little St. Mary, and beyond it, where Downing College now is, the common arable "St. Thomas' Leas" and the common pasture of Coe Fen. Beyond the King's Ditch, which crossed Jesus Lane, Maid's Causeway ran out between meadow and ploughland to Barnwell Priory.

The following extracts from the book of the rules of the monastery give a good idea of the life and duties of these Canons. It was written in 1295 or 1296, nearly 200 years after the foundation of the house, and the rules would continue in force until Henry VIII. dissolved it.

CUSTOMS OF AUGUSTINIAN

CANONS OF BARNWELL PRIORY.¹

4. The road of Canons Regular is the rule of blessed Augustine, Bishop of Hippo.

6. OF THE REVERENCE DUE TO THE PRELATE.

. . . in the first chapter that he shall hold . . . all officers are to prostrate themselves before him and lay their keys at his feet. . . . In whatever place he passes before them they ought to rise and bow, and remain standing. . . . Whoever brings him a book, or anything else, ought

¹*Customs of Aug. Canons*, J. W. Clark, 1897, Macmillan and Bowes. *Liber Memorandorum Ecclesiae, de Bernewelle*, Book viii, *Consuetudinarium*.

to bow. . . . To him alone is entrusted the decision as to punishment of more serious offences. . . . When he is present no brother should leave the precinct of the monastery without his permission. Within the precinct brethren who go either to the granges, the tailor-house, the garden, or the other offices, though they have received permission from the Sub-Prior, should bow to the Prelate, if he come in, and ask leave of him, and intimate to him the permission they had previously obtained.

7. The Prelate ought to be careful that . . . he neither abuse the high office he has undertaken . . . nor be lukewarm or remiss. . . . For he ought not to have honour without trouble. . . . He ought to sleep with the rest in the Dorter, to eat with them in the Frater . . . to make his round within and without the offices ; for who will then find him to be idle ? . . . On all double feasts . . . he says first and second Evensong, Mattins and High Mass. . . . the Prelate ought not to ring the bell ; or even give the signal in the Dorter to wake the brethren. He must by no means presume, without the advice and consent of the Chapter, to sell or exchange, to give or alienate, church property as lands, tenements ; to expel a brother from the monastery ; to receive back one who has been expelled ; to admit a novice or a lay-brother ; or to present incumbents to vacant churches or vicarages.

10. OF THE PROVOST WHO IS CALLED SUB-PRIOR.
. . . when the Prelate is absent, or even when he is present, the Sub-Prior acts as his subordinate. . . . It is . . . his duty . . . to make his round, in order that he may restrain those who are walking to and fro ;

and those behaving in an unseemly manner. He should specially do this after Compline, when silence will be most complete, and no one is allowed to leave the Dorter. Then, if it be winter-time, he is to light a lantern, and visit different offices round the Cloister, and the Farmery also, because at that time neither those who have been bled, nor those who are infirm ought to remain there, but only the sick who are lying there in bed. He ought also to shut the doors round the Cloister, to exclude all secular persons, to take the keys with him, and deposit them in the Dorter, and so at length sleep with the Convent. . . .

11. . . . the Prelate ought not either to appoint or to depose the Sub-Prior without the advice of the spiritual brethren, nor except in hearing of the Chapter.

13. The Precentor, who is also called Librarian . . . has charge of the books . . . it is part of his duty to rule the Quire. . . . let no one set their opinion above his ; and let no one disturb what he has begun by beginning anything else. or by beginning in any other way.

14. OF THE SAFE KEEPING OF THE BOOKS.

The Librarian . . . is to take charge of the books of the Church ; all which he ought to keep, and to know under their separate titles ; and he should frequently examine them carefully to prevent any damage or injury from insects or decay . . . he has to provide the writers with parchment, ink and everything else necessary for writing ; and personally to hire those who write for money. . . .

The press in which the books are kept ought to be lined inside with wood, that the damp of the walls may not moisten or stain books. . . .

Further, as books ought to be mended, printed and taken care of by the Librarian, so ought they to be properly bound by him.

15. OF THE OFFICE OF THE SACRIST.

18. OF RISING FOR MATTINS.

Brethren ought to rise for Mattins at midnight. Hence the Sub-Sacrist, whose duty it is to regulate the clock, ought before then to ring the little bell in the Dorter to awaken the Convent. . . . Next, when the lantern has been lighted, which one of the younger brethren ought to carry in front of them, and a gentle signal has been given, they should put on their shoes and their girdles, march into Church in procession, and devoutly and reverently begin the triple prayer, six at a time.

20. At daybreak, at a signal from the Warden of the Order, all the brethren ought to rise. No one ought to remain in bed any longer without a very reasonable excuse. When they leave the Dorter, after washing their hands and combing their hair, they ought to go to the Church before they turn aside to any other place. . . . After this, while the priests are preparing themselves for private masses, let some attend to the duties assigned to them, others take their books and go into the cloister, and there read or sing in an undertone.

OF NOVICES.

25. . . . let the master teach him how to keep guard over his eyes. After this let him lead the Novice into the Quire, and there let him say the Lord's Prayer three times on his knees, with as many salutations of the Blessed Virgin. Then let his master lead him to his bed in the Dorter, and there, if it be needful, let him receive

his tunic and girdle, and utter his private prayers. Then, returning with his master into the Cloister, or rather the Chamber, let him be taught how to behave at the whole Mass, always guarding his eyes. After Mass let him be taught how he ought to behave at meals, at grace before and after, and at the noontide repose if it ought to be held, and at Nones. Then let him be taught how he ought to behave at Evensong, at Supper, at Collation, at Compline, and at the triple prayer ; and how, after receiving the holy water, he should cover his head and pass through the Cloister to the Dorter, and how he is to take off his shoes under his habit. . . . Next his master is to be at his side when he goes to bed, and shew him how to arrange his habit round about him. When it is time to get up for Mattins, the Master is to come to the novice, and help him with his clothes and shoes, and make him sit before his bed, with his head concealed in the depths of his hood. There he is to sit and wait for the ringing, and go with the convent into the Church, and, when Mattins are over, return with the Convent to his bed in the Dorter. . . . Let him honour his seniors. Let him learn the signs for the avoidance of too much talking. Let him speak in gentle, not in clamorous tones ; let his gait be devout, not hurried ; let him be pleasant with everybody.

28.

OF SILENCE.

Silence is to be kept according to the Rule (of St. Augustine) in the Church, the Dorter, the Cloister, and the Frater ; but it may be broken in the event of four accidents, namely : robbers or thieves ; sickness ; fire and workmen. Moreover, it may be broken for the sake

of a King or Princess, an Archbishop or a Bishop. . . .

Silence is to be kept in the Cloister from morning till after Chapter ; but after Chapter, if no Hour follow immediately, the brethren may have leave in each day for talking in the Cloister, which may last until the ringing of the Hour (Service) preceding High Mass. . .

29. OF THE CHAPTER.

The Chapter-House is a place for confession, necessary to the soul, but hateful to devils. As brethren sin daily, they ought to come daily to the Chapter-House, that they may there amend their daily faults. . . . No one ought to offer any defence of an accused brother, or even to speak unless called upon. . . .

A matter that has been once settled by the Chapter ought not to be again unsettled without the consent of the Chapter.

30. OF PROCESSIONS.

All the brethren ought to assemble for all the processions on Sundays, and other solemn processions. All those who have been bled, all the officers, and even the infirm or feeble, who can be present without danger, ought to come to the blessing of water and to the procession. . . . In the Sunday procession round the Cloister the bearer of the holy water ought always to go first ; next those who carry the cross and the tapers ; next after them the Sub-Deacon with the book ; the Deacon next after him ; lastly, the Priest. The Convent, the juniors at their head, are to follow at a slow pace ; the Prelate, turning neither to the right nor to the left, but walking in the middle of the path, will be the last in the procession.

On all Wednesdays and Fridays throughout Lent,

the convent ought to walk round the Cloister without shoes.

31.

OF THE FRATERER.

It is the duty of the Fraterer to lay the table-cloths . . . to set clean salt on each table in clean salt-cellars, and if it should have got damp, to serve it out for use in the kitchen, dry and wipe out with a cloth the damp salt-cellars, and so set on clean salt. . . . He ought also to fetch bread for the use of the brethren from the cellar, and to be careful that the bread is clean and not burnt, nor gnawed by mice, nor dirty. . . . The jugs ought to be washed inside and out once a week ; and the Fraterer ought to be cleaned thoroughly with besoms as often as it requires it. The Almoner will provide baskets and besoms for collecting the remnants of the table. . . .

The Fraterer ought also to provide mats and rushes to strew the Frater and the alleys of the Cloister at the Frater door, and frequently to renew them ; in summer to throw flowers, mint and fennel into the air to make a sweet odour ; in summer to provide fans. When cups and spoons are broken he is to get them mended, and he is to count them every day to see that none are missing, and at night to lay them up in a safe place.

32.

IN THE FRATER.

While the brethren are sitting at table . . . they ought to speak sparingly, and not to let their eyes wander. . . . No one is allowed to exchange fish for meat ; no one may whittle, or write, or look at a book . . . no one may rise from table or leave the room, or fetch anything for himself from the hatch. No one may come in after the second dish has been set on the table.

. . . If both dishes, or one of them, be found to be spotted with dirt, let an alternative be provided.

The servitors are to serve the food quickly and actively, not running or jumping in an unbecoming fashion, and they are to hold the dishes neither too high nor too low, but so that the food may be seen by him who carries it. The dishes are not to be broken, or dirty, or unsuitable, or smeared on the under side. The servitor should use both hands, and carry only a single dish, except when he is serving eggs. If he cannot bring the brethren all they ask for, he ought, nevertheless, to reply to them civilly. . . . There is to be no talking at the kitchen-hatch, because the noise might be heard by the brethren.

33.

THE DORTER.

A brother may enter the Dorter as often as he has need to do so, but he ought not to linger there unless he wish to change his sheets or to make his bed.

34.

RESPECT DUE TO THE CONVENT.

When the Convent is talking no secular ought to come near nor even to stand at a distance listening and looking towards them.

Should the Convent go beyond the precincts in procession, they ought to be preceded by cross, candles, and so forth ; and their freemen ought to turn out of their path any horses and carts advancing in an opposite direction, in order to prevent them passing through the midst of the Convent, or to stop them until the Convent have passed by.

35.

OF THE ALMONER AND HIS KINDNESS.

The Almoner ought to be kind, compassionate and God-fearing. He ought also to be discreet and careful in

making his apportionments. He ought to endow with a more copious largess pilgrims, palmers, chaplains, beggars, lepers. Old men and those who are decrepit, and lame, and blind, or who are confined to their beds, he ought frequently to visit, and give them suitable relief.

40. OF THE GRAINGER AND OF THE RECEIVERS.

All the property of the monastery, both in corn and in money . . . passes through the hands of the Grainger and the Receivers. Whatever belongs to bread and beer, to seed or allowance, ought to come out of the granary ; whatever belongs to money ought to be handed out of the treasury by the hands of the Receivers.

The Grainger ought . . . to set down on tallies all the profits of the manors, and to write out tallies of each. . . . The Receivers ought to do the same by help of tallies and rolls, and when the Prelate chooses, lay a final account before the Convent.

41. OF THE HOSTELLER.

. . . it becomes him to have not merely facility of expression, but also elegant manners and a respectable bringing up . . . for friends are multiplied by agreeable words. . . perfect cleanliness and propriety should be found in his department, namely, to keep clean cloths and clean towels ; cups without flaws ; spoons of silver ; mattresses, blankets, sheets not merely clean but untorn ; proper pillows ; quilts to cover the beds of full width and length and pleasing to the eyes of those who enter the room ; a proper laver of metal ; a basin clean both inside and out ; in winter a candle and candlesticks ; fire that does not smoke ; writing materials,

clean salt . . . the whole Guest-house kept clear of spiders-webs and dirt, and strewn with rushes under-foot ; . . . a sufficient quantity of straw in the beds ; keys and locks to the doors, and good bolts on the inside, so as to keep the doors securely closed while the guests are asleep.

42. OF THE CHAMBERLAIN.

It is the chief duty of the Chamberlain to provide warm water for the shaving of the Convent, and soap for washing their heads. He is to provide soap for the baths of the brethren, if it be asked for.

The Chamberlain ought to provide a laundress of good character and good reputation to wash the garments of the Convent. She must be able properly to mend and wash all the linen of the brethren, namely, surplices, rochets, sheets, shirts and drawers. The linen ought to be washed once a fortnight in summer and once in three weeks in winter.

44. OF THE MASTER OF THE FARMERY.

The Master of the Farmery . . . who ought to have the care of the sick, ought to be gentle, good tempered, kind, compassionate to the sick, and willing to gratify their needs with affectionate sympathy. It should rarely or never happen that he has not ginger, cinnamon, peony, and the like, ready in his cupboard. . . .

No secular ought to enter the Farmery . . . women never. Physicians, however, may enter, and take their meals with the sick if they have obtained leave.

The Master of the Farmery ought frequently to . . . ask them, with kindly interest, whether they wish for anything. . . . Further, he should provide . . . a fire

on the hearth, should the state of the weather require it, a candle, a cresset, and a lamp to burn all night ; and everything that is necessary, useful and proper.

52.

OF LAY-BRETHREN.

Lay-brethren are not to be admitted to the habit, unless they are instructed in some craft which is useful to the monastery ; for, as regular Canons ought to be occupied day and night in things spiritual, so lay-brethren ought to labour for the profit of the Church in things corporeal ; for in a monastery no one ought to eat his bread unless he work for it.

OF THE CHAPTER (FROM CUSTOMS OF ST. VICTOR).

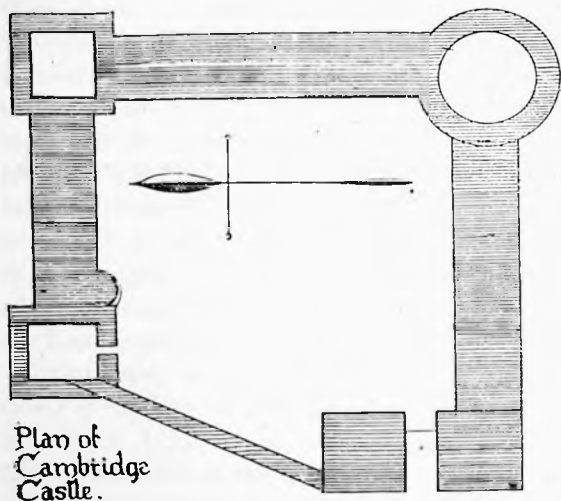
He who makes an accusation is first to say : " I accuse such or such a brother." The accused . . . is to answer nothing from his place, but to come in front of the Abbot, to bend the knee, and then, standing upright, to await patiently . . . if he is not conscious of it he is to say briefly . . . " My lord, I do not remember that I did or said what my brother mentions." Then his accuser may not repeat his accusation, and the accused, if the Abbot so direct, may go and sit down. . . . When anybody has to receive discipline, he is to rise to his knees and modestly divest himself of his garments. Then, bending forward, he is to remain covered with the same garments from his girdle downwards, and as he lies there he is either to be completely silent or to say merely : " It is my fault, and I will amend myself." Meanwhile no other brother is to speak unless one of the Priors should humbly intercede for him ; and he who flogs him is not to cease from flogging till the Abbot bids him. When he has ceased, he is to help the brother to put on his clothes ; who.

clothed and standing upright, is not to stir till the Abbot says : " Go and sit down." Then he is to bow, and go to his place.

Ely had long been another of these great houses. Since Hereward's day Normans from 1081 to 1199 were building its magnificent cathedral, and in Ely, Barnwell and Cambridge had a keen rival. Ely was a centre for pilgrimage and the first good harbour for incoming ships, but Cambridge at the Conquest became the seat of the King's Sheriff who had to gather his dues from towns and traders. When men might trade at Soham or Reach, Bottisham or Ely, just as they chose, it would be hard for the Sheriff's men to make sure that no little boats escaped them, and the King's dues must often have gone unpaid. This, rather than care for the welfare of Cambridge, probably caused Henry I. to issue a writ addressed to all great people who might raise claims to levy dues in any part of the county. It runs :—

" Henry, King of the English to Hervey, Bishop of Ely, and all his Barons of Cambridgeshire, Greeting : I forbid that any boat shall ply at any hithe in Cambridgeshire, save

at the hithe of my borough of Cambridge, nor shall barges be laden save in the borough of Cambridge, nor shall any take toll elsewhere but only there; and whosoever shall do forfeit in the borough, let him there do



right; but if any do otherwise, I command that he be at right thereof before my justice when I command that there be plea thereof. As witnesses: the Chancellor and Miles of Gloucester and Richard Basset at London.”¹

¹ See *Cambridge Borough Charters*.—Bateson.

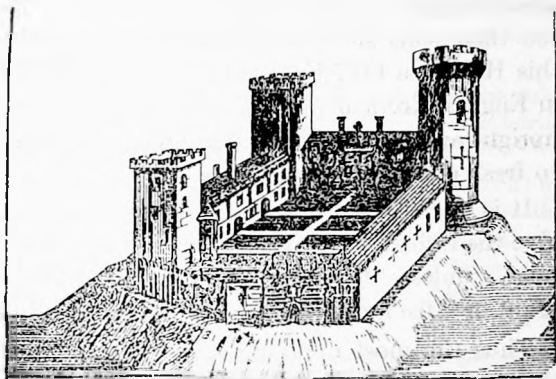
The effect of this writ must have been to decide the rivalry in favour of Cambridge by drawing all the shipping away from Ely: perhaps it was now that the wares at St. Awdry's Fair became "tawdry," being reduced to such light trifles as could be carried overland, while the heavy goods went up by barge to the hithes that lined the banks of the Cam above and below Magdalene Bridge. Cambridge became in practice a Staple town, the only channel of trade for the countryside, and the burgesses waxed fat accordingly. Soon they began to try to shake off the hand of the Sheriff in money matters. The way to do this, which was becoming usual since London had set the example in 1100, was to get leave from the King to "farm" ¹ the dues which the town had to pay to him. Such dues were the "haw gavel," a small rent on each house, the "land gavel," a rent on the strips of the plough land, a payment for the right to have a market and the tolls which were taken there, the fees paid by men who had to go to the King's court for justice, pay-

¹ To farm the taxes was to have the right of collecting all dues from the burghers on condition of paying a fixed round sum yearly to the king; as publicans did in Palestine to Caesar.

ments to the King's miller for grinding corn in his mill, and so on. These three last might vary very much from year to year; if, instead of them, a lump sum of a fixed amount were to be paid year by year, both parties might gain. The king would be certain what revenue he could expect; and if the tolls, etc., increased, the town would reap the benefit by collecting them themselves. Thus somewhere between 1161 and 1189 the men of Cambridge must have asked for this privilege, for there is a charter from Henry II. granting the town the right to "farm" the dues:—

"Henry by the grace of God King of England and Duke of Normandy and Aquitaine and Count of Anjou, to his Justices, Sheriffs, and all his Ministers and faithful people Greeting. Know ye that I have delivered at farm to my burgesses of Cambridge, my town of Cambridge to be holden of me in chief by the same farm which my Sheriffs were wont to render to me, and so that they themselves do answer therefor at my exchequer. And therefore I command that ye guard and maintain the said burgesses and all things to them belonging as

though they were mine own, so that no one may in any wise cause to them injury or damage or grievance. For I will not that they answer therefor to any but to me and at my Exchequer. As Witness: Roger the son of Reinfrid at Quévilly.”¹



View of Cambridge Castle, from an ancient drawing, supposed to have been drawn about the reign of Queen Elizabeth.

This charter marks in a sense the beginning of the self-governing life of the town. Henceforth it is a tenant in chief of the king; the Sheriff, while he still held the King's court in the borough had no longer any excuse for

¹ The King was this year in Normandy; his hunting seat was at Quévilly.

meddling with its trade or making any exactions on the burgesses. It is quite in keeping with Henry II.'s treatment of his sheriffs, whose power he sternly checked. Before his reign they were usually local men and used their local influence to make themselves almost strong enough to defy the King, often too their sons succeeded them. To prevent this Henry in 1167 had removed every sheriff in England from his office, replacing only the upright among them, and sending even those to fresh counties.

It is to be noted that this charter does not give the right for good, but only for the king's reign, unless it were renewed. The final grant or "fee farm" was given by King John.

Thus the most opposite interests, those of the King, the Prior and Nun, the down-trodden Shylock of the Jewry, the worldly-minded, comfortable burgher, and the grasping Norman noble, all played their part in developing the wealth and fame of the new royal port of Cambridge.

Hitherto history has rarely recorded the life of the people, but now and then when some king moves across the stage "the light

that beats upon a throne " throws the humbler, attendant figures into relief.

King John is such an one. In the second year of his reign he granted a charter which confirmed the old rights and gave important new ones to the townsmen :—

I. That they should have a gild of merchants [a most important right which was often the beginning of self-government].

II. That no burgess should plead without the walls of the borough of any plea, save pleas of exterior tenure (except the King's moneyers and servants).

III. That no burgess should make duel ; [*i.e.* trial by battle] and that with regard to pleas of the Crown the burgesses might defend themselves according to the ancient custom of the borough. [Probably by bringing a certain number of neighbours to swear to their uprightness.]

IV. That all burgesses of the merchants' gild should be free of toll, passage, lastage, pontage, and stallage in the fair, and without, and throughout the ports of the English Sea, and in all the King's lands on this side of the sea, and beyond the sea (saving in all things the liberties of the City of London). [Toll = a payment to the King ; passage = payment made by a passenger ; lastage = payment on every load passing ; pontage = payment for crossing bridge ; stallage = payment for right to erect a booth to sell goods.]

V. That no burgess should be judged to be in mercy as to his money, except according to the ancient law of

the borough which they had in the time of the King's ancestors. [To be in mercy = to be liable to fine.]

VI. That the burgesses should have justly all their lands and tenures, wages, and debts, whosoever may owe the same, and that right should be done to them of their lands and tenures within the borough, according to the custom thereof.

VII. That of all the debts of burgesses that should be contracted at Cambridge and of the pledges there made, the pleas should be holden at Cambridge.

VIII. That if anyone in all the King's dominions should take toll or custom of the men of Cambridge of the merchants' gild, and should not make satisfaction, the Sheriff of Cambridgeshire, or the Reeve of Cambridge should take therefor a distress at Cambridge (saving in all things the liberties of the City of London).

IX. That for the amendment [upkeep] of the borough, the burgesses should have a fair in Rogation Week, with all its liberties as they were accustomed to have.

X. That all the burgesses of Cambridge might be free of yereshive and scotale if the King's Sheriff or any other Bailiff had made scotale. [Yereshive or Geares-Gifu was an annual gift or exaction commonly required by Sheriffs: Scot-ale a feast at which only the Sheriff's ale might be drunk. In a second Charter, of the year 1207 King John granted the farm for good or "in fee-farm."]

XI. That the burgesses might have all other liberties and free customs which they had in the time of the King's ancestors, when they had them better or more freely.

XII. That if any customs should be unlawfully levied in war, they should be quashed.

XIII. That whosoever should come to the borough of Cambridge with his merchandise, of whatever place, whether stranger or otherwise, might come, tarry, and return in safety, and without disturbance, rendering the right customs.

XIV. That anyone causing injury, loss or trouble, to the burgesses, should forfeit £10 to the King.

XV. That the burgesses and their heirs, might have and hold the foregoing liberties, of the King and his heirs, peaceably, freely, quietly, entirely, and honourably in all things.

In this year 1201 John lodged for a night or so at Barnwell Priory. Its Early English Church to St. Giles and St. Andrew, with its central tower, unhappily struck by lightning in 1287, formed the heart of a great group of buildings, standing amid fields and groves by the waterside, where a ferry crossed to Chesterton. Behind the church lay Maids' Causeway, while between road and river stood the farmery, and the Canons' land stretched out to the site of Stourbridge Fair. The Fair brought crowds of merchants and drovers, fishermen with oysters and herrings from Colchester, etc., whose tolls no doubt made a good sum.

But the crowd would also bring beggars and vagabonds, as the races do now, and

so certain Friars of St. Mary Magdalene set up a refuge for those most miserable of all wanderers, the lepers. Camp-followers of the Crusaders spread this Eastern disease all over Europe at this time. Charity for their distress and a wise care for the health of the town were no doubt equal motives for the rule by which they were forbidden to pass through Barnwell to go within two miles of Cambridge. King John supported this regulation by granting to the friars the dues of the fair to be held in the close of the leper's hospital of St. Mary Magdalene at Stourbridge, and at the same time authorised the Prior and Canons of Barnwell to hold Midsummer Fair. Stourbridge Fair was to be held on the Vigil and Feast of Holy Cross, which would begin on September 7th. By Barnwell Station still stands the hospital chapel raised by those friars, a solid stone building made for long use, but with the rare decoration of a hooded doorway and windows with fine Norman work. Though we have no lepers now we might well use it for other needs. Many are glad to have it lit and cared for in God's service again.

Not far away on the road to Ely stood another Norman house built by other Benedictines, Denny Abbey, perhaps the finest piece of Norman work in the county; it passed into the hands of Templars, and later became a nunnery. It is now a farmhouse.

Much later than the Benedictine monks and Austin Canons, whose houses since Saxon England became Christian had been springing up all over the land, there had come to Cambridge in the 13th century new streams of puritanic Christians, the friars. Sworn like the early monks to poverty, they differed from them in their aims, which were, not by leaving the world to rescue their own souls, or by ceaseless prayers to atone for the worldliness of others, but to go about the world doing good and preaching to the poor. Already in 1201 the Friars of St. Mary Magdalene were caring for the lepers at Barnwell, and in 1224 the Grey Friars came to Cambridge. These had been founded by the devoted, gentle St. Francis of Assisi, and lived in the Old Synagogue; fifty years later they began to build "a noble church" where Sidney Sussex now is.

These Franciscans were vowed to complete poverty ; and in Cambridge, as elsewhere, they settled in the poorest quarter. The contemporary account, written by T. of Eccleston, says :

“ At Cambridge the brethren were at first received by the burgesses who made over to them an old synagogue near the prison. The neighbourhood of the prison, however, was intolerable to the brethren, since both they and the gaolers had to use the same entrance ; so our lord the King gave them 10 marks, with which they were able to buy out the lease from the Court of Exchequer. Then they built a chapel so very poor that one carpenter made and set up in one day fourteen pairs of rafters. So on the feast of St. Lawrence (Aug. 10th), though there were as yet but three brethren, namely, Brother William of Esseby, and Brother Hugh of Bugeton, both clerics, and a novice named Brother Elias, who was so lame that he had to be carried into the choir, they sang the office solemnly according to note, and the novice wept so much that the tears ran freely down his face. Now this novice afterwards died a most holy death at York.” . . .

“ The first guardian of Cambridge was Brother Thomas, of Spain.”

“ The custody of Cambridge was particularly remarkable for its want of temporal goods, so much so that at the time of his first Visitation of England, Brother Albert of Pisa found the brethren . . . to be without mantles.”

Other reformers followed, the Austin Friars settling on Peashill, the Carmelites or White Friars on the site of Queens'. Before the end of the century the Pope's "Black Dogs," the Dominicans, took up their place outside Barnwell Gate, opposite Dowdiver's lane.

The Fairs

IN the commercial as well as the religious life of Cambridge, monks and friars played their part. At the great religious festivals, to which pilgrims from all parts of England and from abroad used to flock, fairs were held. In Cambridge there were four. The oldest seems to have been Midsummer Fair, held "from the time of which the memory of man does not run." The name suggests that it may even have been a survival of pagan, midsummer revels. However that may be, this fair came under the sanction of the church. The Prior and convent of Barnwell held a charter from Henry III., dated 1229, giving them the right to hold this fair. In 1298, the Prior having seized the goods of a felon who had fled from the fair, the Mayor challenged his jurisdiction ;

but the following agreement was reached between them :

I. That all who lived within the town or liberties of Cambridge, and who, according to the custom of the town, sustained or were obliged to sustain the burdens arising in the town, as in watches, tallages, scotages, suits of court, and other contributions, should be free in the said fair of stallage, boothage and toll.

II. That the goods of thieves, fugitives and cutpurses, if any such should be thereafter taken, or found in the said Fair by the Prior or his bailiffs, should be immediately delivered to the bailiffs of the town, and that the burgesses of Cambridge should indemnify the Prior and Convent for so doing.

III. That all who live in the town and liberties, and do not bear nor are obliged to bear the duties or perform the services before mentioned, should be as much obliged to the Customs of the Fair as those that come from any other place.

This agreement left the Mayor the unchallenged authority for the keeping of the peace within and without the town. In the next year the Prior's right to hold the Fair at all was inquired into by the king's Itinerant Justices under the act of " Quo Warranto," passed twenty years earlier. He produced Henry III.'s charter, and his right was allowed. It seems to have been exercised peacefully for two hundred years ; then in 1496, " the Prior

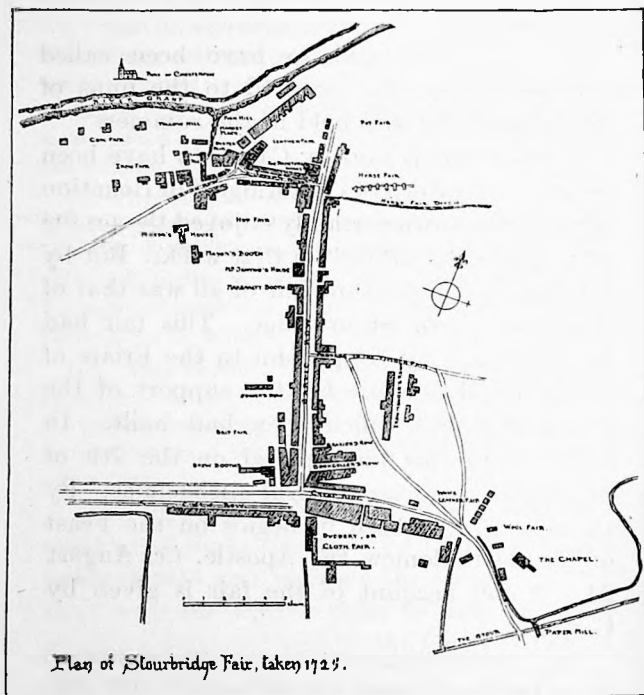
and Convent of Barnwell leased for one year to the Mayor and bailiffs, the Fair called Barnwell Fair.”¹

Another fair, said to have been called “Garlic Fair,” was granted to the nuns of St. Rhadegund and held in the summer.

A third fair is said by Carter to have been held “in the town of Cambridge” in Rogation Week; the town certainly enjoyed the profits of a fair held at Reach in that week. But by far the most important fair of all was that of Steersbrigge, or Stourbridge. This fair had been granted by King John to the Friars of St. Mary Magdalene for the support of the Leper Hospital which they had built. In early times this fair opened on the 7th of September, and lasted until Michaelmas. By the time of Elizabeth, it begins on the Feast of St. Bartholomew the Apostle, *i.e.* August 24. A full account of the fair is given by Carter:

“Near half a mile east of this village [Barnwell] Sturbridge Fair is kept, which is set out annually on St. Bartholomew by the Mayor, Aldermen, and the rest of the Corporation of Cambridge; who all ride thither in a grand procession, with music playing before them, and

Cooper's *Annals of Cambridge*.



most of the boys in the town on horseback after them, who, as soon as the ceremony is read over, ride races about the place ; when returning to Cambridge each boy has a cake and some ale at the Town Hall. On the 7th of September they ride in the same manner to proclaim it ; which being done, the Fair begins, and continues three weeks ; though the greatest part is over in a fortnight.

§ 14. " This Fair, which was thought some years ago to be the greatest in Europe, is kept in a cornfield, about half a mile square, having the River Cam running on the north side thereof, and the rivulet called the Stour (from which and the bridge over it the Fair received its name) on the east side, and it is about two miles east of Cambridge market-place ; where, during the Fair, coaches, chaises, and chariots attend to carry persons to the Fair. The chief diversions at Sturbridge are drolls, rope-dancing, and sometimes a music-booth ; but there is an Act of Parliament which prohibits the acting of plays within fifteen miles of Cambridge.¹

§ 15. " If the field (on which the Fair is kept) is not cleared of the corn by the 24th of August, the builders may trample it underfoot to build their booths ; and, on the other hand, if the same be not cleared of the booths and materials belonging thereto by Michaelmas Day at noon, the plough-men may enter the same with their horses, ploughs, and carts, and destroy whatever they find on the premises. The filth, dung, straw, etc., left behind by the fair-keepers, make amends for their trampling and hardening of the ground.

¹ This Act continued to be enforced till the middle of the nineteenth century.

§ 16. "The shops or booths are built in rows like streets, having each their name ; as Garlick Row, Book-sellers'-row, Cook-row, etc. And every commodity has its proper place, as the Cheese Fair, Hop Fair, Wool Fair, etc. ; and here, as in several other streets or rows, are all sorts of traders, who sell by wholesale or retail, as goldsmiths, toy-men, brasiers, turners, milliners, haberdashers, hatters, mercers, drapers, pewterers, china warehouses, and, in a word, most trades that can be found in London, from whence many of them come. Here are also taverns, coffee-houses, and eating-houses in great plenty, and all kept in booths, in any of which (except the coffee-booth) you may at any time be accommodated with hot or cold roast goose, roast or boiled pork, etc.

§ 17. "Crossing the main road at the south end of Garlick Row, and a little to the left hand, is a great Square, formed of the largest booths, called the Duddery, the area of which Square is from 240 to 300 feet, chiefly taken up with woollen drapers, wholesale tailors, and sellers of second-hand clothes ;¹ where the dealers have a room before their booths, to take down and open their packs, and bring in waggons to load and unload the same. In the centre of this Square was (till within these three years) erected a tall May-pole, with a vane at the top ; and in this Square, on the two chief Sundays during the fair, both forenoon and afternoon, Divine Service is read,

¹ The special development of the woollen trade in this fair is said (by Fuller) to have been due to certain traders from Kendal in Westmorland (famed through many centuries for its manufacture of cloth), who were here weather-bound on their way to the great entrepot at Norwich, and found a ready sale for the goods which they spread out to dry.

and a sermon preached from a pulpit placed in the open air, by the Minister of Barnwell ; who is very well paid for the same by the contribution of the fair-keepers.

§ 18. " In this Duddery only, it is said, there have been sold £100,000 worth of woollen manufacturers in less than a week's time ; besides the prodigious trade carried on here, by the wholesale tailors from London, and most other parts of England, who transact their business wholly in their pocket-books, and meeting here their chapmen from all parts, make up their accounts, receive money chiefly in bills, and take further orders. These, they say, exceed by far the sale of goods actually brought to the Fair, and delivered in kind ; it being frequent for the London wholesale men to carry back orders from their dealers for £10,000 worth of goods a man, and some much more. And once in this Duddery, it is said, there was a booth consisting of six apartments, all belonging to a dealer in Norwich stuffs only, who had there above £20,000 worth of those goods.

§ 19. " The trade for wool, hops, and leather here is prodigious ; the quantity of wool only sold at one fair is said to have amounted to £50,000 or £60,000, and of hops very little less.

" September 14, being the Horse Fair day, is the day of the greatest hurry, when it is almost incredible to conceive what number of people there are, and the quantity of victuals that day consumed by them.

" During the Fair, Colchester oysters and white herrings, just coming into season, are in great request, at least by such as live in the inland parts of the kingdom, where they are seldom to be had fresh, especially the latter.

§ 20. "The Fair is like a well-governed city ; and less disorder and confusion to be seen there than in any other place where there is so great a concourse of people : here is a Court of Justice always open from morning till night, where the Mayor of Cambridge, or his Deputy, sits as Judge, determining all controversies in matters arising from the business of the Fair, and seeing the Peace thereof kept ; for which purpose he hath eight servants, called Red-coats, attending him during the time of the Fair and other public occasions, one or other of which are constantly at hand in most parts of the Fair : and if any dispute arise between buyer and seller, on calling out ' Red-coat,' you have instantly one or more come running to you ; and if the dispute is not quickly decided, the offender is carried to the said Court, where the case is decided in a summary way, from which sentence there lies no appeal.

§ 21. "About two or three days after the Horse Fair day, when the hurry of the wholesale business is over, the country gentry for about ten or twelve miles round begin to come in with their sons and daughters ; and though diversion is what chiefly brings them, yet it is not a little money they lay out among the tradesmen, toy-shops, etc., besides what is flung away to see the puppet shows, drolls, rope-dancing, live creatures, etc., of which there is commonly plenty.

§ 22. "The last observation I shall make concerning this Fair is, how inconveniently a multitude of people are lodged there who keep it ; their bed (if I may so call it) is laid on two or three boards, nailed to four pieces that bear it about a foot from the ground, and four boards round it, to keep the persons and their clothes from falling

off, and is about five feet long, standing abroad all day if it rains not. At night it is taken into their booths, and put in to the best manner they can ; at bed-time they get into it, and lie neck and heels together until the morning, if the wind and rain do not force them out sooner ; for a high wind often blows down their booths, as it did A.D. 1741, and a heavy rain forces through the hair-cloth that covers it.

§ 23. " Though the Corporation of Cambridge has the tolls of this Fair,¹ and the government as aforesaid, yet the body of the University has the oversight of the weights and measures thereof (as well as at Midsummer² and Reach Fairs³) and the licensing of all show-booths, live creatures, etc. ; and the Proctors of the University keep a Court there also to hear complaints about weights and measures, and see that their Gownsmen commit no disorders."

The great concourse of people to this fair brought much fame and profit to the town, helping to spread its European repute of the

¹ The tolls were originally granted (by King John) to the Lepers' Hospital at Stourbridge.

² Midsummer Fair is held on Midsummer Common, between Cambridge and Barnwell, and was of old connected with Barnwell Priory. The Common derives its name from the fair.

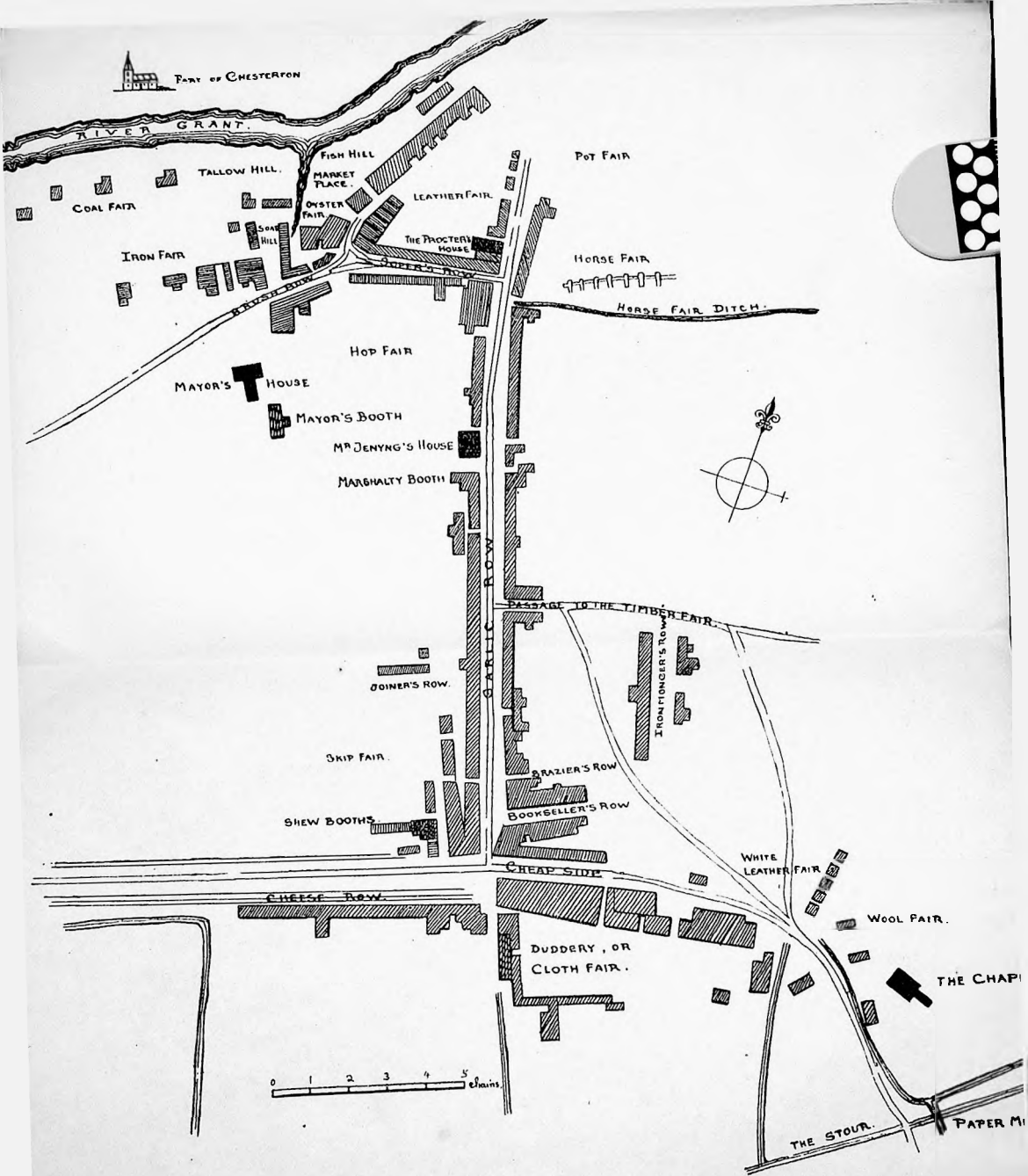
³ Reach is situated at the Fenward extremity of the Devil's Dyke, and is about seven miles from Cambridge: It is now quite a small village, but its position made it a place of great importance in early times. A Roman villa has been unearthed there, and local tradition declares that the place once possessed seven churches. Its situation at the River Gate of the Icenian and East Anglian realms must have made it from the first a place of traffic, and its Fair remained famous for many centuries.

place among classes other than merely intellectual, especially in the Empire and the Low Countries, where the sacks of English wool were worked up into bales of cloth, until English merchants began to compete in this stuff.

With the Renaissance and the religious changes of the sixteenth century, the system of fairs began to yield place to the use of permanent shops, and in 1516 the burgesses of Cambridge got control of Stourbridge Fair. The award runs "the mayor, bailiffs and burgesses and their successors for evermore shall have, hold and enjoy, keep and maintain the said fair called Stibridge Fair . . . yearly from the feast of St. Bartholomew to the feast of St. Michael the Arcangel in September."

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Plan of Stourbridge Fair, taken 1725

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